

SHERINA  
*Chandra*

# HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

## THE REAL 'SECRETS'

*The Wisdom*

# UNDERSTANDING STRESS

PART #1

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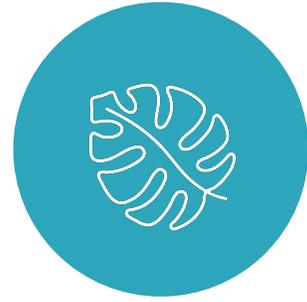


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SURROUNDING YOUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH.

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# LET'S TALK ABOUT *Stress*



Many **men, women and youth** are keeping themselves in a constant loop of 'busyness' resulting in stress. Are you wondering if you've been stretching yourself out too thin and **whether your body's been trying to tell you to slow down?**

**S**tress is your body's natural response to threat and it reacts with physical, cognitive, behavioural and emotional responses. During the early stages of human evolution, our 'paleo ancestors' were literally placed in threatening and harmful situations by being faced with potential wild animal attacks. Their bodies reacted with their 'fight or flight' responses triggering the release of cortisol. Over time, as humans evolved we no longer find ourselves living in the wild with vicious animals; however, we are still confronted with stress in other forms. *Your daily life and busyness are the new 'vicious'* - Personal relationships, work and money are daily stressors for most people.



## **THE BODY'S RESPONSE TO STRESS**

Stress response triggers changes in the nervous, endocrine and immune systems. Physiologically, the sympathetic nervous system, the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis and the behavioural flight-or-flight response are activated.\*

- Cortisol, a steroid hormone gets released into the bloodstream by the adrenal glands.
- An increase in heart rate and blood pressure.
- A redirection of blood to larger muscle groups.
- Airways are constricted leading to a shortness of breath and rapid breathing.
- The gastrointestinal tract - changes in how fast food gets digested.
- Increased blood-glucose levels.
- Muscles get tense.

Many of these physiological responses to stress are activated by the sympathetic nervous system which also triggers a rush of adrenaline throughout the entire body.

## **WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF STRESS?**

Again, today's causes of stress are related to keeping yourself in a constant loop of busyness which is mainly caused by feelings of inadequacy.

- **The need to feel accepted** with a particular group of people such your colleagues or your peer group. You get into people pleasing and begin to undermine your values and compromise your well-being.
- **Excessive workouts** prevent your body in returning to a good state of homeostasis and keep in a state of stress.

## YOU BEGIN TO COMPROMISE YOUR WELL-BEING IN AN EFFORT TO PLEASE OTHERS, TO FEEL ACCEPTED AND TO BE RECOGNIZED

- **Worrying** The Canadian Payroll Association reported 2019 survey findings that money was a the main source of worry for over 43% for employed Canadian workers.
- **Long work days** In 2014 it was reported that nearly 9%of Canadians are working over 50 hours a week
- **Workplace stress** which includes feeling isolated, under-valued and over-worked.
- **Social media** causes inadequacy about your life, increases feelings of loneliness and increases anxiety and depression.
- **Pressure to succeed** - many young people are constantly doing more in an effort to uphold perceived expectations of them.
- **Relationships** that intertwined with control, and a lack of understanding and setting healthy boundaries.

### *WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS?*

The consequences of stress if left ignored can lead to chronic illnesses and can cause you to live an undesired lifestyle.

**Physical** - heart disease, diabetes, gastrointestinal problems, long-lasting migraines, a compromised microbiota and premature death.

**Cognitive** - long-term depression and anxiety, memory loss, and a decrease in focus and clarity.

**Behavioural** - easily frustrated with family and friends, irritable, easily angered, and withdrawn.

**Emotional** - guilt, low self-esteem, lack of motivation and excessive worrying.

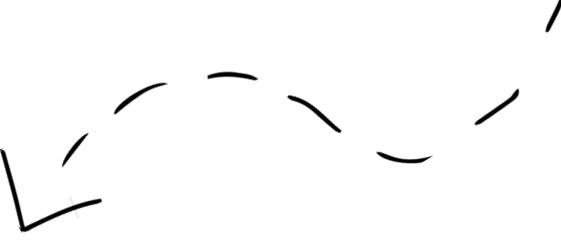
### *OTHER EFFECTS OF STRESS*

Some other noticeable effects of stress are: problems with sleeping, upset stomach, working out too little or too much, hair loss, decrease in appetite, unhealthy eating patterns, negative behaviours such as nail biting, panic attacks, and fatigue.

### *IS IT WORTH IT TO KEEP YOURSELF BUSY?*

It's understandable that you have bills to pay, but If you're keeping yourself busy to satisfy your desire to feel more adequate, accepted and liked; then you may just be compromising your health and well-being.

There are other ways to cope with unsettled feelings such as: speaking to a counsellor/therapist, informing your doctor about your health concerns, being more present, regulating your emotions, and to spending more time with yourself doing things that bring you joy. When you begin to tap into who you really are and what you actually want for yourself versus what you are spending your time doing; you will begin to let go of certain undesirable tasks and thoughts and begin to better take care of your well-being.



**ARE YOU DEALING WITH STRESS? (IF YOU AGREE WITH MOST OF THESE, YOU JUST MIGHT BE EXPERIENCING STRESS)**

- Feeling undervalued at work
- Working in isolation
- Constantly saying 'yes' when you mean 'no'
- Experiencing frequent headaches
- Filling up on sweets and fried foods
- Have an unstructured eating schedule
- Having trouble sleeping
- Getting angered or upset easily
- Working out excessively or not at all
- Experiencing issues with your bowel
- Always fatigued
- Spending little time on your appearance
- Experiencing hair loss
- Piling work to keep busy
- Spending time scrolling social media
- Comparing yourself to others
- In an emotional state of exhaustion
- Experiencing heart palpitations
- Socially withdrawn

**HERE ARE 10 WAYS TO GET BACK ON TRACK**

**#1 Clean-up your eating patterns.** Eat food high in anti-oxidants, rich in nutrients and aid in a health gut. The gut and the brain are connected through a nerve called the vagus nerve. Drink plenty of water throughout the day. A healthier diet equates to happier thoughts.

**#2 Define your values and set boundaries** to prevent yourself from being emotionally exhausted by other people, work demands, expectations from family and friends and potential toxic situations.

**#3 Develop a healthy form of exercise.**

Minimally, you only need to spend 30 minutes a day in performing any type of exercise or movement. Exercise helps with oxygen flow throughout your body helping to keep you in a state of calm.

**#4 Take control of your sleep.** By receiving proper sleep, you will restore your hormones back to their normal state which will aid with proper digestion and better eating habits. It will also help you remain focused.

**#5 Become more mindful.** Spend at least 5 minutes a day journaling, sitting in silence, doing something you enjoy, and/or focusing on your breathing.

**#6 Stretch/do yoga.** Stretching helps your muscles loosen up which increases blood flow throughout your body and places you in a calmer and less tense state.

**#7 Visualize an ideal day for yourself.**

When you keep your thoughts focused on desirable actions, they are likely to occur.

**#8 Clean-up your social media accounts.**

Delete any accounts that make you feel inadequate (accounts that show body-image, wealth and emulate 'perfection')

**#9 Just say 'NO.'** If a request will compromise your well-being, don't do it! You don't require a reason, just a firm 'No.'

**#10 Make time to learn.** Develop more wisdom on things that are of interest to you.