



Controlling the Demons of Stress

1.) Controlling the Demons Of Stress

Emotional outbursts that leave you exhausted and embarrassed. Impulsiveness. Being critical and domineering. All doom and gloom. Overeating and vegging out in front of the TV. Reckless and impulsive behavior. Feeling depressed and withdrawn. Do you see yourself in any of these descriptions?

Fatigue, anxiety and stress can turn you into someone you don't recognize...or like. When you're Dr. Jekyll, are you imaginative, optimistic and a visionary? But after working too many long hours or are hit with one disaster after another, does Mr. or Ms. Hyde appear and you find yourself becoming obsessed with details, depressed and withdrawn? Are you normally efficient and focused, perfecting the systems and procedures that are in place? And then, when your world is turned upside down and you don't know what's coming next, do you find yourself worried about possible future disasters or becoming reckless and impulsive?

Your Demon Self

According to Myers-Briggs, there are 16 personality types with different preferred behaviors. We develop these behaviors early in life and rely on them to function in the world. Our preferred behavior is usually in charge when things are going well. Under stress, our inferior or least developed behavior often emerges, because we are no longer consciously suppressing it. Since we have not developed these "inferior" behaviors, we are not experienced at expressing them.

How do you perform under stress? Take 5 or 10 minutes to reflect on the following:

- How do I perform when I'm at my best?
- How do I perform when I'm under stress?
- What are the consequences to me when my "demon" self responds to stress and change?

Remember the person I described above, who's usually imaginative and excited about the future and then becomes obsessed with details and depressed? That's my demon self! People I live or work with, who are used to an easy-going person who's excited about future possibilities are now faced with a withdrawn nitpicker. It can feel like you've stepped into the movie, Invasion of the Body Snatchers!

Your Body Barometer

Your body is a barometer of changes due to stress. If you listen to it, it will show you where you're holding stress. If you ignore it for too long, it will start shouting at you. That's when you end up at the chiropractor, doctor or masseuse! Learn from your body by completing this exercise:

Draw a simple picture of a body. Think of a stressful situation. Fully relive it. Then do a body scan. Using colored pencils or pens draw where your stress shows up in your body.

Stress shows up in my body as a clenched jaw with tightness in the shoulders and back. If too much time passes in this state, a twinge in my lower back shows up.

Body Smile

Dee Gold, a certified yoga therapist with degrees in clinical psychology and expressive arts therapies, teaches her students and clients' different techniques they can use to manage stress. At her Inner Reaches yoga and body therapy studio, she helps her clients increase awareness of how stress shows up for them individually and identify stress management techniques that work best for each person.

One exercise she shared recently at our Community of Executives Dialog was a meditation offered by a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Han, called, "Smiling Down," which Dee describes as a special form of body scan. Try it for yourself:

- Close your eyes.
- Get comfortable in your seat. Sit upright with your sit bones firmly aligned.
- Take a deep breath and then release it as if you were sighing.
- Scan your body. Does one part of your body speak to you?
- Smile at it. Let it relax.
- Scan again. Does another part of your body speak up?
- Smile at it.
- Continue repeating until you feel relaxed

As a manager and leader, you set an example for others in the workplace. When you are not functioning at your best, your behavior impacts those around you sending ripples throughout your organization. Resulting in lower morale, conflicts and decreased production, which ultimately impacts your bottom line!

Learning More about Stress Management

Are you interested in learning more about how your personality type reacts to stress and how you can better manage it? This fall Northwood Consulting, Ltd. and Inner Reaches are collaborating on a 1 1/2 day retreat addressing stress and how to turn it into personal power. On Friday afternoon, you'll explore your Myers-Briggs personality type and how it impacts you. Saturday you will then learn different techniques for managing your stress.

If you're interested in a fun, relaxing, experience, that will make a positive difference in your life, and the lives of everyone around you, contact us via e-mail at karen@northwoodconsulting.com and dee@innerreaches.com or call Karen at 301.990.6331 and Dee at 301.987.0884. Watch for details in the near future. We can also offer this as part of a company retreat! (Just think how great it would be if everyone in your office knew how to manage their stress!)



2.) A Meditation On Creating Your Own Day

In the movie *What the *#* Do We Know!?*, Dr. Joseph Dispenza shares how he creates his day. A biochemist and doctor of chiropractics with continuing education in neurology, neurophysiology and brain function, he discusses how our thoughts affect us on a cellular level and the possibility of how we create our own reality.

"I wake up in the morning and I consciously create my day the way I want it to happen. Now sometimes, because my mind is examining all the things that I need to get done, it takes me a little bit to settle down and get to the point of where I'm actually intentionally creating my day. But here's the thing: When I create my day and out of nowhere little things happen that are so unexplainable, I know that they are the process or the result of my creation. And the more I do that, the more I build a neural net in my brain that I accept that that's possible. (This) gives me the power and incentive to do it the next day."

To learn more visit www.whatthebleep.com or rent the movie.