



CENTERSTONE

Wellness Program

The Good News About Stress

5 facts of the benefits of stress

Are you feeling overwhelmed, tired, anxious or frustrated? Everyone encounters stressful circumstances most every day. Stress is a natural reaction of your mind and body to external demands. The good news is that stress can also provide an invitation to improve your life and recognizing stress is an opportunity for individual growth and positive change. Stress is actually essential to life. It is the excessive or unresolved stress that results in negative consequences. The key is how you believe, perceive and react to the various less-than-desirable circumstances of everyday life.

Below are five, perhaps surprising, ways that stress can actually help you and increase the satisfaction of your life:

It Gets your attention

Noticing stress in your life serves as a warning sign – a waving, glowing red flag that something in your life may not be working its best. How do you first recognize stress in your life? You may experience symptoms of stress either physically, emotionally or behaviorally. Some people first recognize stress when they detect a headache or backache. For others, they may easily become impatient, snappy, and snippy. And others may notice the stress in one area of their lives only when it has leaked into or even barraged other areas, much like dangerous and scattering cancer cells. Experiencing excessive stress can get your attention by unveiling a number of issues; including lack of life balance, unhealthy relationships, or deteriorating health problems, to name a few. Pay attention to these. Take note of the warning signs that your stress level may be climbing, and do something about it today.

It reveals core needs*

Think of the last time you had a stressful day. One person's experience of stress may be very different than another person's. This is because as individuals we have different core needs. When these needs are not being met, stress soon follows. If one spouse, for example, has a core need of order, and the other does not share in this need or try to meet that need, anxiety and stress can be a daily irritation. Or, if one person in a group has a core need for planning and scheduling and the rest of the group prefers to "wing it," the person who needs certainty will definitely feel stress. It is important to identify your core needs and acknowledge the link between unmet needs and stress. Therefore, when you recognize your core needs are not being met in one way, you can choose a different way to get them met.

It readjusts your expectations

We are full of expectations – lots of expectations. Some we are consciously aware of and many others, we are not. Expectations are always there in the background of our daily experiences however. They are a common source of stress in our lives, creating emotional distress, relationship conflicts, misunderstandings, and many other repeated problems. Expectations produce stress in two main ways. Some are unrealistic or untrue, like the blissful and problem-free expectations that newlyweds encounter. Others expectations are those of which we are completely unaware, like the belief that life or people will be fair. This blindness will surely lead to stress and strain. When we harbor expectations that are too high, we set ourselves up for failure. The stress resulting from this disappointment serves as an opportunity to readjust our expectations – of ourselves, and of others.

It reminds us of personal responsibility

Stressful experiences serve as reminders of what you can control and what you cannot control. You are probably keenly aware you cannot control other people – whether family, friends or co-workers. Their actions can disappoint us, betray us or discourage us on a regular basis if we allow them to. We have no control over what another person ultimately does. We can only control our response to them. This kind of stress serves as a distinctive reminder to take personal responsibility for our choices. The stress encountered from other people's actions, or inactions, can sometimes feel like it is eating us alive. It is unfortunate when we fail to see our reaction choices as options for immediate stress management. Circumstances may be beyond our control, but there are many options for how to deal with, or adjust to them that can cause less stress. Begin taking responsibility for your choices that contribute to, or minimize, your stress today.

It leads to growth!

Life is never stagnating, and this is a good thing. Change is constant. It is constant in relationships, in the environment, and in the work force. The burden of stress resulting from change is common in our culture today. As leadership expert and motivational speaker John Maxwell puts it, "Change always involves growth." Through the growing pains of adjusting to aging and to navigating through other life transitions, experiencing some degree of stress is normal. Through disappointments, loss, and the fact that we live in an uncertain world, stress is normal as well. And through this stress and change, we grow and persevere by learning new ways to accommodate, to develop patience, to mature, and to practice lessons learned. Any given circumstance of stress will change with time. Or we can choose to change ourselves. The good news about stress here is...it always leads to growth. Capture your opportunities for growth for whatever current stressors it seems are managing you. And look back to the growth that has brought you where you are today.

For more information about reducing your stress through individual or family counseling, contact Centerstone at (615) 460-HELP, or visit www.Centerstone.org. To request Susan to speak with your group or organization, contact her at (615) 460-4445.

About Centerstone

Centerstone (www.centerstone.org), a not-for-profit organization, is the largest behavioral healthcare provider in Tennessee and the ninth largest in the nation. Serving the community for more than fifty years, Centerstone provides a full range of behavioral health and related educational services to individuals of all ages and their families.

More at Midday June 13, 2007

Centerstone is devoted to research that seeks to identify, treat and eliminate mental illness. Centerstone provides services to more than 50,000 individuals annually. Children, adolescents, adults, seniors, and families all receive help from a multitude of different programs at more than 65 facilities and 140 partnership locations throughout the region. For more information about Centerstone, please call (615) 460-4357 or toll free at (888) 291-4357.

About Susan Gillpatrick, MEd, LPC, CTS

Susan Gillpatrick, Centerstone Crisis Management Specialist, primarily works in the field with clients in critical incident response situations, and in Centerstone's wellness trainings and presentations. She is also responsible for planning and implementing marketing and growth strategies for Centerstone's Crisis Management Strategies.

In recent years, Ms. Gillpatrick worked for the Shelby County Government Victims Assistance Center in Memphis. There, she co-developed a model program for the state of Tennessee entitled, "Homicide Response." Her work in this area received the 2000 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

Ms. Gillpatrick is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Trauma Specialist, Certified Workplace Conflict Mediator, and Mental Health Service Provider in the state of Tennessee and a National Certified Counselor. She is also a member the American Counseling Association, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, the Tennessee Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Middle Tennessee Employee Assistance Professionals Association. She is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, and has had numerous articles published. She received her Master of Education degree in Human Development Counseling from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University.

** For further exploration and valuable understanding of your core needs, see the list below. Share these individual needs with special people in your life, and encourage them to share with you. You may be amazed at what you learn. These core needs are what make you unique. It is worthwhile to identify your top five or so needs, and frame your life around opportunities to have these met. Less stress and greater life satisfaction will abound!*

Needs List

BE ACCEPTED

Approved
Be included
Respected
Permitted
Be popular
Sanctioned
Cool
Allowed
Tolerated

TO ACCOMPLISH

Achieve
Fulfill
Realize
Reach
Profit
Attain
Yield
Consummate
Victory

BE ACKNOWLEDGED

Be worthy
Be praised
Honored
Flattered
Complimented
Be prized
Appreciated
Valued
Thanked

BE LOVED

Liked
Cherished
Esteemed
Held fondly
Be desired
Be relished
Be adored
Be touched

BE RIGHT

Correct
Not mistaken
Honest
Morally right
Be deferred to
Be confirmed
Be advocated
Be encouraged
Understood

BE CARED FOR

Get attention
Be helped
Cared about
Be saved
Be attended to
Be treasured
Tenderness
Get gifts
Embraced

CERTAINTY

Clarity
Accuracy
Assurance
Obviousness
Guarantee
Promises
Commitments
Exactness
Precision

BE COMFORTABLE

Luxury
Opulence
Excess
Prosperity
Indulgence
Abundance
Not work
Taken care of
Served

TO COMMUNICATE

Be heard
Gossip
Tell stories
Make a point
Talk
Be listened to
Comment
Informed

TO CONTROL

Dominate
Command
Restrain
Manage
Correct others
Be obeyed
Not ignored
Keep status quo
Restrict

BE NEEDED

Improve others
Be a critical link
Be useful
Be craved
Please others
Affect others
Need to give
Be important
Be material

DUTY

Obligated
Do the right thing
Follow
Obey
Have a task
Satisfy others
Prove self
Be devoted
Have a cause

BE FREE

Unrestricted
Privileged
Immune
Independent
Autonomous
Sovereign
Not obligated
Self-reliant
Liberated

HONESTY

Forthrightness
Uprightness
No lying
Sincerity
Loyalty
Frankness
No withholds
No perpetrations
Tell all

WORK

Career Performance
Vocation
Press, push
Make it happen
A task
Responsibility
Industriousness
Be busy

ORDER

Perfection
Symmetry
Consistent
Sequential
Checklists
Unvarying
Right-ness
Literal-ness
Regulated

PEACE

Quietness
Calmness
Unity
Reconciliation
Stillness
Balance
Agreements
Respite
Steadiness

POWER

Authority
Capacity
Results
Omnipotence
Strength
Might
Stamina
Prerogative
Influence

RECOGNITION

Be noticed
Be remembered
Be known for
Regarded well
Get credit
Acclaim
Heeded
Seen
Celebrated

SAFETY

Security
Protected
Stable
Fully informed
Deliberate
Vigilant
Cautious
Alert
Guarded