

THE SECRET WAR WITHIN: WHY YOU'RE LOSING AND HOW YOU CAN WIN INSTEAD

Stress is a term that's used as a catch-all in our modern society. And while most recognize that it's not fun to be "stressed out", most don't realize how insidious of an epidemic it is, nor are they aware of the extreme consequences if left unresolved. In fact, stress, to your body can take many forms: running up a flight of stairs, not getting adequate rest, traumatic incidents, anger/resentment, feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and negative thinking are just a few examples. Your body doesn't differentiate between types of stress...imaginary "worst case scenarios" are just as real to your body as physically falling down; that's why movies can scare you, even though nothing is actually happening to you.

Physiologically, stress activates the ANS (autonomic nervous system), which in turn stimulates the release of two hormones: cortisol and adrenaline. These hormones help to regulate our body and mind so that we can respond effectively (fight or flee) to the stressor. For example, our short-term memory is enhanced, we have greater energy available, and a stronger immune system. Normally, after the stress has passed, our bodies would resume their normal state of balance. In situations where stress (whether emotional, physical or both) becomes the norm however, the body becomes stuck in either an over or under aroused state because of the damage caused by consistently high levels of these hormones. It's as if the "switch" on the cells gets turned off, so that they don't recognize or respond appropriately to the hormonal signals.

So, the things that were mobilized to protect us over time can start to hurt us. The consistently elevated levels of cortisol and adrenaline, which are quite useful for managing stressful situations, also affect:

1. **Metabolism.** The increased cortisol level elevates blood sugar (aka "hyperglycemia"), which, if prolonged, will result in a rise in insulin. If this goes on, it often leads to type 2 diabetes and obesity.
2. **Skeletal System.** Elevated levels of cortisol also are linked to gradual demineralization of bones (osteoporosis).
3. **Cardiovascular System.** These elevated levels of cortisol and the resulting hyperglycemia and insulin imbalance, generally promote hypertension (high blood pressure) and an increase in "bad" cholesterol. This combination then leads to the hardening of the arteries (arteriosclerosis).
4. **Cognitive Function.** The acute stress and hormonal imbalance also diminishes our ability to keep track of information and places by impairing nerve function and instigating atrophy of the nerve cells in the hippocampus (the area that manages spatial and verbal memory).
5. **Immune System.** Normally the hormones secreted by the ANS mobilize immune cells to deal with any pathogens. In the case of chronic stress however, this capacity is diminished resulting in the many auto-immune diseases we face today, including arthritis (inflammation of the joints), chronic pain, CFS, and lupus.

Luckily for us, we have a brain that filters our world experiences and interprets them as "friend or foe". And this brain is capable of influencing the ANS. And fortunately, most of our stressors in modern day are more mental/emotional than physical; as there are few of

us who need to contend with wild animals chasing us on a consistent basis. Unfortunately, however, none of us are taught the importance of our filters (beliefs) and interpretations (perspective based on the beliefs), nor do we know how to adjust them when they're stressful.

Doctors tell us to eat right and exercise and to relax and lead a balanced life. In fact, Dr. Dean Krahn¹ says: "Whatever the cause may be, protecting your body against over-exposure to stress hormones is as important to the body as the ability to mount an adequate allostatic (fight or flight) response in the first place....In dealing with the type of allostatic load involving hormone over-production, it is important to use behavioral coping skills to control over-production of stress hormones in challenging situations....If this sounds like an admonition to 'positive thinking' it is exactly that."

But the doctors don't take us from where we are (eating junk food, sitting behind a computer all day, tense and angry, and a workaholic for example) to where we "should" be. And that's at least partially due to western medicine's focus on the physical and chemical side of the equation. There is, however, an "energetic" component beneath everything physical...and medicine even uses this understanding for diagnosis, e.g. EEGs and EKGs (which measure the electrical energy in the brain/heart). For some reason, however, this energetic component is not used in treatment.

And that's where energy medicine or energy therapy comes in. You've probably already heard of, or perhaps even tried, acupuncture or acupressure. These healing arts recognize the energetic nature of the body and seek to influence the movement of this energy in a way that restores balance. And that is very helpful. But it doesn't resolve the *cause* of the energetic disturbance in the first place, which I would say is due to our beliefs and therefore, our perspective on the events of our lives. And this is where we get to the good news.

Since our brains are capable of influencing the ANS, if we can influence our brain, we can influence our bodies, and in particular the stress hormone levels. And we are all capable of learning and changing our minds and seeing things from new perspectives. So, all we need are the tools that enable us to consistently and deliberately shift our minds (beliefs and thus perspective), so that the shift results in our bodies.

And that's what I do at InsightfulWay. I teach you how to deliberately make the energetic shift so that your body naturally restores itself to calm and well-being. Call for a free 15 minute phone consultation; and if you work with me, remember you have nothing to lose...if you don't shift, your session is free.

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¹ "The Response to Stress", 1999, by Bruce McEwen, Ph.D. and Dean Krahn, M.D. posted on their website www.thedoctorwillseeyounow.com