COPING
WITH
STRESS

How to Cope With Stress, Face It Head On, Stay Calm And Achieve Self Righteousness
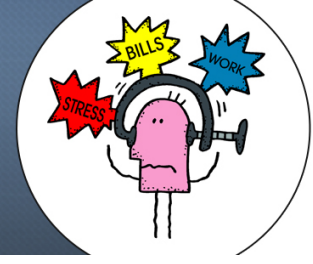
Every day the weather changes in some way. Maybe it's the breeze, or the temperature. Perhaps it's raining or it's snowing, or even a beautiful day outside. The point is that the weather is always ever present in our lives. While you can't control the weather, what you can do is make it more manageable, such as through dressing more appropriately to suit the conditions outdoors.

This is very similar to stress in that we can't necessarily avoid stress from trying to weasel it's way into our life, but we can face it head on and cope with it to prevent it from taking over. Stress, defined as our reactions to external situations or internal psychological states, affects our physical health and, of course, emotional well-being. Despite all of the books, features, and advice that's been put out there regarding the topic of stress, why are so many of us still feeling overwhelmed by it day after day?

One reason may be that we're unable to accept that the process of living life in itself causes various forms of stress, which means it's truly impossible to eliminate entirely. You can't live life without encountering stress, it's just a fact.

But not all stress is bad, per se. For instance, the excitement of achieving a goal and the occurrence of happy events in our lives can result in due stress that we welcome in many ways.

However, it's realistic to avoid, or even just reduce the harmful forms of psychological stress, such as worries, anxieties, depression, fears, and agitation as well as the damaging physiological reactions, such as increased heart rate, higher blood pressure, weakened immune system, muscular tension, and so on. It's really no surprise that stress can also influence us to behave destructively or drastically.

It should be stated though, that in coping with stress, we should aim to avoid ineffective or self-defeating approaches, including the overindulgence in smoking, alcohol and the abuse of drugs. These temporary "solutions" not only fail to relieve stress, but can also result in damage both physically, emotionally, and mentally. Not to mention the damage that can be done to relationships and your job as well. Heading down that path can result in addictions and things spiraling out of control.

Another common approach to controlling stress is through the use of what's known as "psychotropic" medication which is prescribed by physicians.

On the other hand, there's also behavioral and psycho-therapeutic techniques that work wonders as well. With most people, these kinds of treatments can be proven effective. But they definitely involve the person to be participating in their own recovery in order to be successful. However, if the person's stress is severe, then medical consultation could also be recommended.

Any knowledgeable physician will treat their patients with the most effective drug that has the fewest side effects based on that patient's particular medical history. They will then follow up with the patient's progress diligently, which I'm sure you're familiar with. They may even reduce the dosage or eliminate the medication entirely when the stress is at a more maintainable level.

You, as the patient, in this scenario, should not hesitate to ask questions of the psychiatrist about the different medications and their side effects. Sometimes, psychotherapy could even be suggested as treatment for more effective and longer lasting progress.

More importantly, physical causes for stressors should definitely not be taken light or skipped over. A good physical look over, by a physician of some sort, may be necessary to find out if some sort of medical treatment is needed. In all honesty, sometimes medications themselves can cause stress reactions. And in considering the causes of stress in our life, we may need to play a little bit of detective.

Let's also keep in mind that everybody differs in their coping styles when it comes to stress. Even with the loss of a loved one, a relationship breaking up, losing a job, or another critical setback in life – some people are just more resilient than others.

Others recover at a slower rate, or may even end up in a rut and have trouble moving forward with their lives. Those who find that their suffering becomes severe or lengthy should without a doubt consider seeking professional help or at the very least talking with someone. There's many people out there that are willing to listen and can help you to find solutions, while also weighing the pros and cons of each.
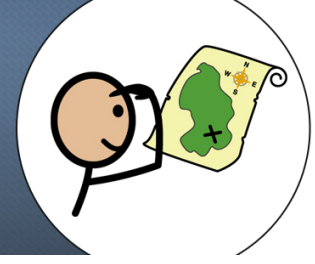
In this section, I'm going to cover a handful of tips and methods that you can implement into your every day life which will help you better deal with stress and even prevent stress from invading into your happiness.

As strange as it may sound – stress can actually be helpful in a number of ways. Like a painful situation, it can be a motivator and catalyst for change in our lives. Be it through finding treatment that can help reduce stress, or doing things to improve the quality of our lives.

Here's two examples that I hear about more often than not...

One has to do with working a job that's overwhelming and damaging to one's physical health and psychological well-being. One of the solution's that you'll often see is that the person being affected ends up quitting their job, and even changing their career path.

The second example has to do with an overwhelming load of work, resulting in a physical change. This could be through weight gain or weight loss, and as a result, takes a toll on the all around health of a person. This is often combated by switching to a healthier eating pattern and even practicing different meditation techniques. Both of these approaches can easily improve both physical and psychological health as well.

Admittedly, just about everybody runs into the same difficulties when they're faced with these kinds of scenarios full of self-destructive patterns. Humans are known to be creatures of habit, however, we can be motivated to change if we're focused on improving our health, life style and longevity, and of course, greater happiness overall.

Now that I've given you fairly broad examples, let me actually present an example of a situation.

A man works for three years without getting a pay raise. Eventually he works up the guts to approach his boss. He learns that the boss was completely unaware of the situation and as such, he received an awesome raise.

This issue occurred because of a miscommunication with the staff and the system, and the employee not saying something sooner. Perhaps this may have been that he underestimated his value as a worker at the company.

His insecurities ended up contributing to the problem. Because of this experience, he realized that he could confront other situations in his life that were bothering him and felt unfair to him.

Realistically though, in many other cases, the supervisor could have reacted completely different to that and became defensive and offended. In that case, the employee could've considered a number of options or solutions.

The problem is that these situations can cause us to act impulsively and in turn can create more problems. Ideally, you should carefully consider your options and solutions, including a full out change in the situation.

There's really no boilerplate solution for stressful scenarios that we find ourselves in with life, especially seeing as every person is different. One person's resolution may be to quite their job, while another person might stomach the stress and tough it out until they find a better opportunity. On the other hand, you should ALWAYS consider the consequences of any choice that you make, and never make them in haste.

It's certainly worth mentioning that other human interaction can offer a lot of satisfactions, but also, as we're all familiar with, stresses as well. Not just talking with a significant other or partner, but also with close friends and people that you trust on that level.

The act of "talking it over" is often helpful, but at the same time, a person's first reaction is to go into defensive or critical mode. The act of criticizing and complaining are obviously counter-productive, and can escalate the conflict further and end up making a bad situation much worse.

Every human desires communication of some form, but it's generally preferred for it to be constructive and tactful. It's easy to slip up and ignore the basic ground rules of effective discussion and communication. Ideally, the best situation for "confrontation" would be an already calm situation where all of those involved in the conversation are willing to spend the necessary time to listen and talk as well.

Rather than criticizing or complaining, and defensively denying any fault, just take the opportunity to listen. Don't neglect stating what you like about the other person, and the positive elements of the relationship. Share your thoughts but remember the circumstances and tone of the conversation.

Let's be honest, if conversation and so on didn't exist, why would you want to remain in the relationship? Be sure to present the difficulties in the right perspective. I can't necessarily go into all of the different effective communication techniques that will help resolve conflicts, but as we all know, there are many.

If civil discussions don't seem to help you, then consider other alternatives. If you can't necessarily talk to somebody close to you, then you need to look into the other options that are on the table for you.

Final Thoughts

Winding down this brief "report" or "course" as I like to call it, a lot of this was condensed into a format that makes it presentable in this short time span we've had.

Stress is something that everybody faces, regardless of the person, career, or position in life. It's just a matter of how we go about dealing with it, and the steps that we take to counteract the stress and stressors that come our way.
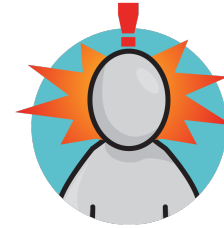
In summary though, the general approach to understanding and coping with stress isn't all that complex.

For starters, you need to realize that stress isn't something that you can avoid. The aspect of living can cause stress, and the more you explore and live, the more you may be prodded with stress. The way you react is to improve your life.

Above that, when stress comes your way, you need to consider the actual cause of the stress itself. And then consider the options for reducing, dealing, or eliminating the stress somewhat or entirely.

Still, you should realize that many stress inducing situations can develop over time and will often be quite complicated to understand or solve. With that said, don't expect instant overnight solutions. Consider the solutions as a process in which you may be thrown off, enter blind spots, make mistakes, and so on. But always consider the ways to recover and better resolve the situation as a whole.

Also realize that stressful situations and their reactions are not limited to fight or flight and just that. The human species has the capabilities for reasoning and considering constructive options if we stay motivated, realistic, flexible, and of course, remain open to getting professional help if need be.

Lastly, understand that an optimistic attitude can be maintained and even learned if necessary, which can help us to better handle the stresses in our lives and in turn, live much more full and happy lives. In closing, always keep an open mind!