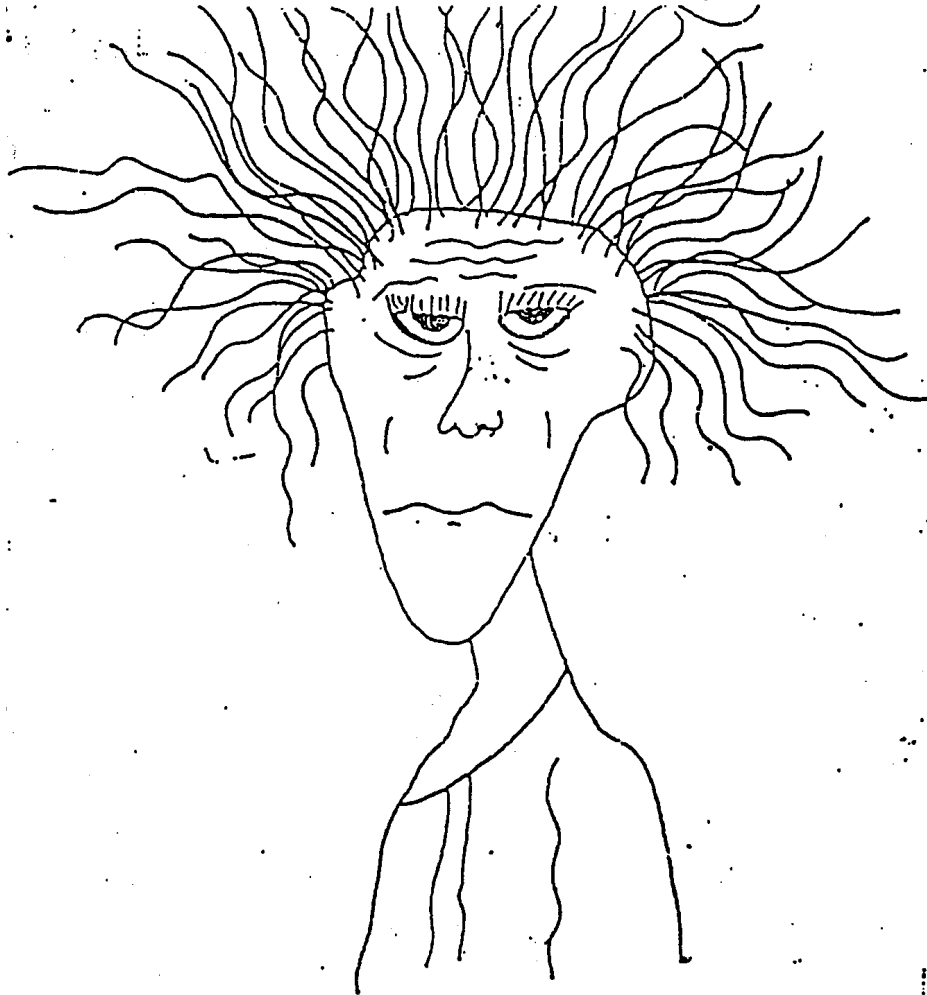


De-Stressing & Empowering “U”



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ways TO MAKE YOURSELF MISERABLE

1. WAIT FOR OTHERS TO MAKE YOU HAPPY OR WORSE YET BLAME OTHERS FOR THE REASON YOU ARE SO UNHAPPY OR ANGRY.
2. USE THE TERM "IF ONLY I HAD" WHENEVER YOU ARE REGARDING TIME, MONEY, OR FRIENDSHIPS.
3. COMPARE WHAT YOU HAVE WITH WHAT OTHERS HAVE.
4. ALWAYS BE SERIOUS AND/OR STRIVE FOR ABSOLUTE PERFECTION.
5. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVERYTHING, TRY TO PLEASE EVERYONE, OR IN SIMPLE TERMS NEVER SAYING NO OR NOT ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY.
6. HELP OTHERS BUT DON'T ALLOW OTHERS TO HELP YOU
7. CONSIDER YOUR WANTS UNIMPORTANT
8. IF ANYONE COMPLIMENTS YOU, DISCOUNTING IT
9. IF ANYONE SAYS ANYTHING (GOOD OR BAD), EXAGGERATE IT
10. ALWAYS STAY CALM AND COOL
11. RESIST CHANGE TO THE END
12. ALWAYS IN THE PAST OR IN THE FUTURE

A thought: Live each day as if it were your last, as someday you will be right.

MEASURING LIFE STRESS

This list is only one tool to look at your life events that may or may not affect you sometime in the future. This list is not meant to diagnose stress or predict what may or may happen to you, it is a tool to help you look at common events that may or may not have occurred. When this list was developed it was suggested that a total of 300 or more may indicate a high stress level. **Check all that apply and total them:**

Event	Score	✓	Event	Score	✓
Death of Significant Other	100		Change of work responsibility	29	
Divorce	73		Child leaving home	29	
Marital Separation	65		Difficult(y) with in-laws	29	
Incarceration / Jail	63		Outstanding Personal work	28	
Death of close family	63		Spouse job change	26	
Personal injury / illness	53		New or ending a job	26	
Getting Married	50		Significant change in living conditions	25	
Terminated from work	47		Revising personal habits	24	
Marital Reconciliations	45		Difficulty with boss/supervisor	23	
Retirement	45		Change in work conditions / hours	20	
Health change in family member	44		Change in Residence	20	
Pregnancy	40		Change of school/education	20	
Sexual issues	39		Change of recreational habits	19	
Addition of a new family member	39		Change in religious activities	19	
Business changes	39		Change of social activities / habits	18	
Financial changes (negative)	38		Mortgage / loan issues	17	
Death of a close friend	37		Sleeping issues	16	
Change of work	36		Family gathering changes	15	
Arguments with Significant other	35		Eating habit changes	15	
High mortgages or loans	31		Vacation	13	
Foreclosure	30		Christmas Holiday	12	
Bankruptcy	30		Minor law violations	11	

As you have gone through the list, you likely noted items that would be positive. Stress isn't necessarily a bad event, anything that can cause an emotional reaction in you is considered a stress event.

Even if you score high, it does not mean you will suffer ill effects. Stress events affect everyone differently. On event listed that may affect one person negatively may not affect the next.

With accumulated stress often times we may not even realize it is affecting us. Listening to others when they note they see a change in you may be a helpful warning sign as again we often don't recognize it in ourselves.

COMMON SIGNS / SYMPTOMS OF A STRESS REACTION

Emotional

Anxiety
Fear / Guilt
Grief
Depression
Sadness
Feeling numb / cold
Denying reality
Shock
Feeling isolated
Feeling unappreciated
Feeling lost / abandoned
Worrying about others
Desire to withdraw
Uncontrolled anger / outbursts
Irritability
Increased stubbornness
Intensified / inappropriate emotions

Mental

Slowed thinking
Difficult decision making
Difficult with problem-solving
Confusion
Disorientation (time/place)
Difficulty with numbers
Concentration difficulty
Memory issues
Difficulty naming objects
Repeated event visions
Distressing dreams
Poor attention span
Blaming self or others
Increasing vigilance / startled
Overreacting
Mental rigidity
Consider criticism an attack

Behavioral

Sleeping issues
Loss of sense of humor
Increasing fatigue
Withdrawal / Isolation
Anger outbursts
Suspiciousness
Change in communications
Change in interaction with others
Change in eating habits
Change in alcohol use
Change of normal activity level
Change in speech pattern
Overactive vigilance to environment
Change in overall health
Antisocial acts

COMMON PHYSICAL RESPONSES TO STRESS

Signs and symptoms can show up in almost any body system, some common identified problems include:

- **Cardiovascular System:** Chest pain, rapid or altered heart rate, increase blood pressure
- **GI System:** Nausea, upset stomach, appetite change, vomiting, diarrhea
- **Immune system:** increase frequency of colds or general illness or reactions
- **Endocrine system:** Thyroid issues, diabetic type disorders or changes
- **Musculoskeletal System:** Loss of coordination, muscle aches/spasms
- **Central nervous system:** Anxiety, headaches, memory loss or inability to recall
- **Integumentary:** Skin issues, hives
- **Cognitive system:** Irrational or extreme thoughts, suspiciousness
- **Affective system:** Short fuse, irrational behavior, irritability or other negative emotions

STRESS REDUCTION TECHNIQUES

1. FIND A LISTENER:

Find someone to talk to, someone who will actually listen to you, not ridicule, laugh at or be demeaning in anyway. A true listen is just that “a listener”. If you are that listener, it is important to know that how you handle it can make a world of difference to that person. Do not offer advice, just listen and when done simply say “if there is anything I can help with, let me know”.

2. MUSCLE CONTRACTION / RELAXATION:

Stressful events can lead to an involuntary form of this, practicing when not stressed helps program the body to react a certain way.

- In a sitting or comfortable position, close your eyes, inhale deeply through your nose, hold and then tighten all your muscles. Relax and exhale deeply through your mouth. Repeat as often as you need.
- If standing near a sturdy wall or furniture you can also push against it with your hands in the same manner.

3. MIND-FOCUSING:

Sometimes considered meditation. Meditation takes much practice as it involves you controlling your thoughts and what your mind is doing, your mind likes to stay in control. Similar to # 2, find a comfortable location position and location, close your eyes and focus on somewhere you would rather be. This will be difficult at first as your mind will want to wander. If your location is like sitting by a stream or watching a gentle rain, consider finding a CD or other media that has the sound of this. Actually, hearing it as well as trying to focus will help. Falling asleep though is not meditation as you lose control of your thoughts.

4. YELLING:

Did you know that a robust yell (controlled that is) is a form of tension release. So when your in the mood or just need a good yell, let one go. Some notes though, if your in your car, roll up your window, or if anyone is within ear shot you may want to warn them on what's coming.

GENERAL TIPS:

- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, smoking to relieve stress, these may relax you at first but not release the stress. A good example, lets all go have a drink after a bad call.
- Try to eat a few small meals a day, it is often tough on the job, but digesting a big meal is tough on the body
- They say exercise 20-30 minutes several times a week is a good goal. But sometimes that can be tough. Try to at least get a little walk in daily or a few times a week.
- **LASTLY, DON'T FORGET TO LAUGH:**
Laughing is truly the best medicine. When you goof up be the first to laugh at yourself, you are only human, we all make mistakes and do “uneducated” things. Make sure though if your going to laugh at someone, be sure it is appropriate and they will not take it wrong. Even if they laugh at themselves doesn't necessarily mean you can laugh at them.

FUN TIPS FOR STRESS REDUCTION

1. Jam 39 marshmallows up your nose and try to sneeze them out 1 at a time.
2. Use your Mastercard to pay your VISA bill or the other way around
3. When someone says "have a nice day" tell them "no thanks I have other plans"
4. Find out what a frog (or bass) in a blender truly looks like. (Please no live ones)
5. Make a list of things to do that you have already done.
6. Put your children's cloths on backwards and send them off to school like nothing is wrong.
7. Wear something odd or backwards and go to work.
8. Retaliate with your tax woes, fill out your tax form in roman numerals.
9. Write "OUT TO LUNCH" on your forehead.
10. Tape pictures of your boss/supervisor on watermelons and drop them from high places.
11. Go shopping, by a bunch of clothes, sweat in them and return them the next day saying they smell bad
12. Pay your utility bills in pennies.
13. Drive to work in reverse.
14. Refresh yourself, stick your tongue on a cold guard rail.
15. Tell your supervisor to "blow it out your mule" and let them figure it out.
16. Polish your car with ear wax.
17. Read the dictionary upside down or backwards and try to figure out the secret message
18. For you vinyl folks out there, play the record backwards and listen for the special message.
19. Start a rumor about yourself to someone who doesn't know you and see how it turns out when it finally makes it's way back to you.
20. Bill your health care provider for the time waiting in the waiting room for your appointment.
21. Stare at people through the tines of your fork and pretend they are in jail.
22. Make up a language and ask people for directions.

**** PRACTICE AS MANY OF THESE EVERY SINGLE DAY ****