Eliminate Stress and Find Inner Peace

by Brian Weiss, M.D.

Author of several top selling books based on his experience as a psychiatrist and healer

Stress seems to be inevitable and omnipresent. Wherever we look, potential sources of stress abound, ready to rob us of our joy and damage our health.

The complexity of modern life has increased our overall levels of stress and tension. Twenty-four-hour television news programs as well as the internet allow us to learn about tragedies and disasters within moments of their occurrence, no matter where in the world they happen. There is an illusion of geographical closeness, but parents and grandparents are not really so close or potentially helpful if they need to board an airplane in order to visit. Just a few decades ago, most extended families still lived in the same town and were available for assistance and support.

To look for the lesson in an obstacle allows us to discern the purpose in the event. If we recognize the soul lesson, we can grow beyond suffering, and there is no stress in this state of understanding.

Believing in a divine plan or purpose can drastically reduce stress. We need to look for lessons, things to be learned, from the obstacles in our lives. Sometimes the lifetimes with the most obstacles are those in which we can make the most spiritual progress, where we learn our soul lessons at an accelerated pace. To look for the lesson in an obstacle, or even in a tragedy, allows us to discern the purpose in the event. When we understand the lesson, we can choose to let go of pain and suffering.

As Christian mystic Pierre Teilhard de Chardin once said: "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience." He was right. If we recognize the soul lesson, we can grow beyond suffering, and there is no stress in this state of understanding.

We are overly attached to the results of our actions. If we would detach from our obsession to outcomes, to our assessments of success or failure, we would feel so much happier. If we could only reach out to others with love and compassion and be concerned with what comes back to us—what we will or will not gain—our lives would be filled with joy.

Love is the antidote to stress—yet in this violent, greedy, and hate-filled world, it seems so difficult to love unconditionally. This is an extremely challenging spiritual lesson. If you could love unconditionally...if you were ever mindful of your true spiritual nature, of your soul...if you expected no return for your unsolicited compassionate actions...if you could let go of your emotional attachments to material things...then you would never again experience prolonged or unhealthy stress in your life, and your days and nights would be filled with happiness and joy.

Very few, if any of us, enter this life in a state of spiritual enlightenment. As a psychiatrist, I am aware of the huge struggle to overcome familial and cultural conditioning. How can we be spiritually mindful when our subconscious and unconscious conditioning create sinkholes and quicksand to trap our minds? One way is to start at the beginning. The exercises in my book/CD set entitled Eliminating Stress, Finding Inner Peace approach the alleviation of stress in three ways: physical, psychological, and spiritual.

The first approach is physical, achieved by helping the body reach a profound state of muscular relaxation. If you practice the exercises in my program regularly, you will find that you are able to reach a deeper and deeper level of relaxation and inner peace, each time more and more quickly and easily. As you learn how to totally relax key muscle groups in your body, a kind of muscle memory is established. In addition, awareness of levels of muscle tension is developed and fine-tuned, and you will quickly become aware of subtle changes in the degree of muscle tension much earlier than usual. The relaxation techniques can then be carried into everyday life and, in times of stress, used consciously, breaking the cycle of muscle tension and physical symptoms.

The physical antidote to the stress reaction is extremely important. By practicing with my program, or by utilizing...
other relaxation and meditative techniques, you can abort production of stress hormones and transmitters. Your body will quickly restore its normal nonstress equilibrium as the stress chemicals are neutralized. By practicing, you can become quite expert at blocking the stress reaction altogether.

The second approach to stress reduction is psychological. We can learn to consciously let go of stress by changing our attitudes, perceptions, and perspective. My program empowers the listener with the knowledge that we have control over stress-inducing situations. When we choose, we can alter our mental state and conditioning. We can transform stress into a positive life lesson.

The concept of mindfulness or awareness is critical in this process. Mindfulness means total awareness of all that is happening in the present moment, awareness of what your muscles are doing, what thoughts and emotions are present in your mind at this very moment in time, and what you are perceiving. When you are mindful, you minimize anxiety, because you have become the objective observer of your physical and mental processes.

The third approach to stress reduction is a spiritual one. As we truly understand the nature of our souls and the lessons we all came here to learn, then not only is stress released, but an energy of joy and love flows into our awareness like a river being renewed by the refreshing rains of spring.

Spiritual understanding can dissolve stress and fear; our perspective can be shifted from the everyday and ordinary to the transcendent and timeless. As this shift in consciousness occurs, stress can be eliminated. We see and feel the world in a different way.

To let go of negative thoughts and emotions and to discover inner peace, joy, and happiness—these are the goals. You will find life so much more enjoyable. You will progress with more awareness along your spiritual path. And your soul will manifest itself within a physical body that is infinitely more healthy and resistant to disease. Even if you are still debating or mulling over the spiritual lessons and implications, there is no doubt about the physical benefits you can obtain from the practices and attitudes described here. These health benefits present strong practical reasons for following my suggestions. Along the way, spiritual benefits will accrue anyway. You have nothing to lose, and you have everything to gain.

Dr. Brian Weiss is a psychiatrist who lives and practices in Miami, Florida. He is the bestselling author of several books including Many Lives, Many Masters and Only Love is Real. For more information visit www.brianweiss.com.

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