

Life Can Never Be Completely Stress-Free

You have little control over what life throws at you. You can't prevent every change or catastrophe, not to mention the countless small crises that crop up along the way.

What you can change is how you respond to the challenges that get in your way. You can cower and cringe, or you can take command of yourself.

That is one approach to dealing with the stress you hear so much about these days. Remember, you will not be free of stress as long as you are alive.

Instead of fearing and trying to avoid stress, look at it from another angle. It's the way your body and your mind rev you up so you can do what you have to do. If you remained in a completely relaxed state of mind and body, how could you stay alert in busy traffic or have the drive to get through a shift at work? Without feeling some kind of pressure, how would you continue to take care of your family or excel at a sport?



Since stress and life go together, how can you cope with the inevitable pressures? Here are some suggestions:

- ◆ Get away from your workstation. Eat your lunch or drink your beverage in a different, pleasant location. Find some fresh air.
- ◆ Eat for health — fruit and vegetables instead of chips and donuts, water or juice instead of sodas.
- ◆ Take care of your physical well-being. Sufficient sleep and rest, a healthy diet and regular exercise help you keep your balance mentally and emotionally. If you find yourself over-reacting, maybe you should stop for a short snooze, a walk or a snack.
- ◆ Be aware of your moods as they relate to your physical condition. A sudden inability to cope could be a simple case of coming down with a cold or the flu. Know your body cycles and try to avoid difficult situations when you are the most vulnerable to getting upset.
- ◆ Maintain a solid social network. Include people of all ages. The happy innocence of the young and the calm wisdom of the old can help you keep your perspective. Associate with people not connected to your workplace whose lives are unaffected by whatever on-the-job issue is consuming your attention.
- ◆ If you have a faith or belief system that gives you courage and comfort, nurture it.



Learn to accept life on life's terms. You can't necessarily control what goes on around you, but you can control your attitude. Whether a situation leaves you stressed-out or stimulated to action is all up to you.