

**There's no such thing as stress in the work place!**

## **WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH . . . BEING TOUGH ISN'T ALWAYS ENOUGH**

by Dr. Wayne Dyer

Stress does not exist in the world! There is no such thing as stress happening to you! Some situations in life are **not** more stressful than others! There is no such thing as an anxiety attack!

You are probably asking, "How can he say that stress does not exist in the world when so many people are uptight and full of tension?" The answer is deceptively simple, and also very important to you, if you are going to send stress, tension or anxiety (or whatever you choose to label it) out of your life forever. Stress does not exist in the world, but you are quite capable of thinking stressful thoughts. Keep this distinction in mind. There is no stress, only stressful thinking. Your job is to learn how to think more effectively in all of life's circumstances, and to stop blaming the world for being stressful. The world is just the way it is, regardless of what your opinion about it is. Your boss or green committee chairman is exactly who he is, regardless of what you decide to think about him. Your club or company policies are already in place, and what you think about them may cause you to be full of stress, not the policies themselves.

While there is no stress in the world, the results of thinking stressfully are evident everywhere. Many people are jumpy, tense, ulcer-ridden, nervous, twitchy, fearful, "uptight," and loaded with high blood pressure and other physical manifestations of stressful thinking. Once you place the responsibility for any stress that you are experiencing totally on yourself, you will be on your way to eliminating the painful and often destructive results of that thinking.

Take an example of two situations which many people tend to view as stressful, such as speaking before a large group of people and confronting your superior on the job. The crowded room contains no stress, it is simply a room full of people. Yet if you are the person who is going to speak before them, your mind might start working in ways which will produce stressful reactions. "What if they don't like me?", or, "What if I make a fool of myself, or forget what I'm supposed to say?" These kinds of internal sentences produce anxiety and stressful reactions. Similarly, the example of confronting your superior about a disagreement you have is stressful if you play the same kind of damaging tricks on yourself. Your boss is intimidating because you choose to view him that way, not because he possesses any distressing ingredients. In reality, people and things are just the way they are, and if you have stress in your life, it is because you choose to judge people and things stressfully.

With those ideas in mind, it is important for you to believe strongly that you can eliminate stress

completely from your life if you decide to go to work on it. You can't go to work on the world, only yourself. If you buy the notion that stress comes from stressful thinking, and that it exists only in you, not in life's circumstances, then you can take some specific steps toward not only understanding your stress, but ridding yourself of its devastating effects forever.

### **Understanding Your Stressful Thinking**

Whenever you read an article about stress you will inevitably come to the section which talks about the most stress-producing situations, with rating points for evaluating your chances of having stress. You'll read that moving to a new location is worth a lot of stress points, as is going through a divorce, changing jobs, a death in the family, financial difficulties, or an automobile accident. The emphasis on this kind of writing is on situational stress and that to avoid stress one should obviously avoid these kinds of circumstances and activities. But this is not how stress works at all, and many people go through these kinds of life circumstances regularly and simply refuse to think in stressful ways.

In the composite below, I have listed the real causes of stress. The emphasis on these sources of stress is in looking at your own thinking and behavior, rather than blaming the setting (e.g., the golf course) or the activity for producing the stress.

### **Typical Attitudes and Behaviors That Create Stress**

*Being in an unresolved relationship.* When you are always thinking about your relationship and wondering whether you are in the right place, or if you should bring the relationship to an end, or if your partner is leaving you, this kind of thinking generally takes precedence over everything else, and you will not be able to eliminate the stress until some resolution is forthcoming. Resolve it one way or the other and you will minimize the stress.

*Worry and fretting behavior.* When your mind is consumed about everything in the future, particularly those things over which you have no control, then you are setting yourself a stress trap. You can train yourself to become a non-worrier, just like you trained yourself to fret.

*Impatience.* When you are always expecting everyone else to get things done quickly, and to always do them your way, then you are using your body as a stress apparatus. By being impatient with others, you generally put the same standards on yourself, and you never allow yourself any peace because of your fussy and irascible personality.

*An inability to relax.* If you are always on the go, running from one chore to another and never giving yourself time for yourself, then you are setting up the same stress reaction for which business executives are so well known. You are the executive of your life, and if you run it on a hurry-up mentality, always flitting about and never able to quiet your mind and relax your body, you are building up that deadly stress momentum. Give yourself some time to enjoy your life and relax, just because you feel like taking it easy and for no other reason.

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**Being explosive and angry.** People who are always yelling, demanding and upset are prime candidates for stress. While it is certainly more advantageous to express your feelings rather than keep them bottled up inside, if you consistently choose anger and behave in an explosive fashion, then you are choosing the accompanying stress that goes with it.

**Perfectionism.** People who believe there is only one way to do something, and who demand perfection from themselves and others, are higher on the stress list than those who can tolerate errors and imperfections. When you set up a standard of perfection for yourself, or any other human being, you will almost be disappointed. No one can grow without failing, sometimes, because learning is plainly impossible without failure. Consequently, perfectionists experience a great deal of stress, since they are unable to handle failure. Those who choose perfection generally choose a safe route. They are inflexible and, of course, not at peace with themselves. Winston Churchill once said: "The maxim that nothing avails but perfection may be spelled P-A-R-A-L-Y-S-I-S." Paralysis, I might add, spells S-T-R-E-S-S.

**Placing too heavy an emphasis on money.** There are some people who have dollar personalities. They talk about things and even people in terms of how much they cost, or what they are worth. They always want to place a dollar figure on everything under discussion. This kind of neurotic pursuit of money, and continual discussion of financial matters, keeps the pressure on the person, and that kind of pressure results in excessive stress on the body. There is much to be said for stopping to smell the roses and appreciating the things which don't have price tags on them.

**Excessive competition.** When you are always looking over your shoulder to see how other people are doing before you can evaluate your own happiness, you are using excessive competition to guide you in your life. How others do things or what is going on in their lives is really not very relevant to your own happiness, unless you

want to evaluate your own state of mind based on how you stack up against them. Healthy competition is fine. However, when you allow your performance compared to others to determine your own inner peace, you are handing the controls of your life over to someone else. And that is a stress builder!

**Feeling unimportant or uninvolved in life.** Just as too much hurrying and impatience can create stress, so, too, can indolence and inactivity. If you are not at peace with yourself about what you are doing in life, and if you feel like someone who has no purpose, then you are adding a great deal of stress in your life. If you have no power in your life, it is because you have taught people to treat you in a powerless way. If you want a voice, then you must speak up and insist upon being heard, or you will always have that innercontempt which will keep you in a lifelong stressful state.

**Rigid and inflexible thinking.** If you find it very difficult to accept another opinion, to change, or admit you are wrong, then you are putting a tremendous burden on yourself by way of stress and inter-

nal tension. Rigid people are always looking for something to be upset about, and they find themselves in arguments and even fights a great deal of the time. This kind of argumentation, rigidity, and one-way attitude puts you into a condition of stress.

**No humor or enthusiasm.** Laughter and a light-hearted approach to life are tremendous stress reducers. Having a sense of humor is an attitude that can be cultivated, and those people who do enjoy life and laugh out loud regularly, are far less prone to suffer from the adverse effects of stress.

All of the above attitudes and personality variables contribute heavily to a condition of stress and regular bouts of anxiety. These are the real causes of stress and they come from the choices that you make to be the kind of person you are. Forget about all of the excuses you have for being stressful, such as a tough job, a bad tempered boss, financial problems, and the like, and begin to examine your attitudes and behaviors toward these conditions.



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