

DAY 7: ALL ABOUT STRESS



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Today we look at stress and how it can be our super power!

Zig Ziglar says that working on the mind is like taking a shower, you are not clean forever however- we have to shower daily to stay clean and so we have to continually work on our minds to keep them fit and healthy.

Opening Practice

- Sit upright and close your eyes
- Breathe deeply as you notice its starting and end points.
- Gently open your eyes when you're ready.

Short Term Stress is Our Superpower

- Stress is the body's biological response to overcome challenging situations and adapting to these situations
- When we see a threat, the amygdala of the brain sends a signal to the hypothalamus that we are under threat. This hypothalamus then hits the stress button and tells the body that there is an emergency
- The adrenal glands are asked to produce hormones and neurochemicals, adrenaline, noradrenaline. It injects into your body 300 to 500-fold and puts your body into the performance zone
- Your senses heighten, your heart rate increases, your blood pressure increases and energy is released from the blood stream, your immune system is launched into action and we produce CRH and oxytocin hormones.
- This all takes place in a matter of seconds. At this stage you are super human and at your optimal point.
- At this point you are in the fight or flight mode. This is the first wave of stress and is fully present at the three-minute mark where it is most optimal. This effect can last for about an hour
- The second phase of the stress response happens when the hypothalamus sends a signal to the pituitary gland and asks it to release the hormone ACTH. This tells the adrenal glands to release copious amounts of cortisol into the body. This activates the recovery zone that assists the body to heal from injury and maintains the body's procedures.
- This phase activates at around 15 minutes, peaks at 40 minutes and last for 80 minutes after that.
- Short term stress is actually very advantageous to help us as humans not just to run away from lions but also to create mental sharpness, boost the immune system, give you more energy, increased pain resistance and so on. All of which help us to thrive during difficult circumstances.
- Stress is actually your super power!

Chronic Stress is Our Kryptonite

- The problem comes in when we abuse this super power and use it too often and for too long.
- Your super power can become your Kryptonite when stress becomes chronic.
- Chronic stress increases biological chances that equates to 9-17 years of additional aging.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- It is detrimental to your digestive system, your cardiovascular system and your immune system and damages your brain, even causing it to actually shrink!
- Chronic stress can affect your memory, focus, cognitive potential and your levels of motivation.

Stress Statistics

- 48% of the developed world say that they have the equivalent of 5 years-worth of stressful situations.
- 73% of Americans have experienced psychological issues due to stress.
- 12,5 million working days are lost every year in the UK due to stress, depression and anxiety (49% of these days are attributed to stress).
- 91% of individuals between the ages of 18-21 year-olds report chronic stress.

Coping with Stress Effectively

- Stress is unavoidable and it is not the problem- It is our inability to turn the stress response off that creates a problem!
- We have villainized stress but we actually need to reframe it to the super hero that it is.
- Building resilience to stress is key! This will assist us in managing stress and use it.
- Professional athletes are very good at utilizing short term stress to enhance performance and then turn it off when they no longer need this super power.
- When you combine a stressful event and the perception that it is bad for your health, it increases the 9-17 years of aging by an additional 43%.

You are Stronger than you Think

- Think about the most difficult thing you have ever gone through. You have survived it and you are here now.
- This proves that you have the ability to overcome all of these things that life may have thrown at you!

Mindfulness Practice

- Get into a comfortable position and close your eyes.
- Feel your seat on the chair, feel your feet on the floor.
- Feel the movement of the breath.
- Bring to mind a difficult emotion that you've felt recently without connecting to the story too much.
- Feel where the emotion sits in your body.
- Does it burn, does it squeeze, it is hot, light or dark?
- Can you be present with this feeling in the body?
- Move your awareness to your mind and ask yourself if anything that is arising is too much to handle.
- Reflect on the pains and difficulties that you've gone through in your life. You have come through all of these things.
- Recognise that you are naturally resilient and are indeed capable of overcoming anything.

Join us this coming week as we unpack our toolbox to learn to channel stress effectively and use the super power of stress.

