

Don't be defeated by **STRESS**



Managing stress is essential for maintaining a sense of well-being. Stress occurs when we face situations for which we don't have ready-made responses. The stress factor remains in check and can even be exhilarating as long as our minds entertain the hope that success is imminent. As soon as a feeling of impending defeat or loss sets in, stress becomes unpleasant, unhealthy and draining. This also leads to loss of motivation and destroys all feelings of well-being.

What builds up stress

Stress is multi-faced demon, which we create to drive success, and which eventually gobbles us up. It consists of:

- Threat perception
- Feeling of negativity
- The resultant psychological arousal

The drivers of stress are called *stressors*, and everything perceived, as an impediment to what one desires to achieve is a stressor. The defense reaction causes a psychological alarm to go off, and makes us muster all our energy to achieve the goal. If the situation continues for a prolonged time, the human mind prepares for long-term battle by remaining in a persistent state of active alertness. In an organisation, some of the commonly observed causes of stress among employees are:

- Very high or very low role demands
- Lack of sufficient authority to discharge duties effectively
- Favoritism and poorly handled appraisal discussions

■ Lack of career prospects

■ Impending layoff or role redundancy

At a more individual level, existing personal circumstances, learned responses as well as inherent genetic dispositions cause us to react to stress differently. Major life transitions such as the death of family member, family breakdown, illness or loss of friends also play a role and make us sensitive to stressors that would have been ignored under other circumstances.

How to deal with stress

Here are some of the most effective stress management precepts:

■ Be conscious of your thoughts and deeds, and of what your actions do to you and others.

■ Maintain a healthy and balanced diet.

■ Draw up an integrated life plan — give equal weightage to work, family and society.

■ Practice regular yoga and meditation to balance body and mind — there are very easy modules run by several agencies

■ Remember that it is not about winning at all costs but winning without any damage to you

Finally, remember that we cannot remove stress from our life. There are too many causative factors, and not all of them can be stopped. A reasonable degree of stress can actually be beneficial, because it makes us strive for more. However, it is essential to know how much is enough for each one of us.

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