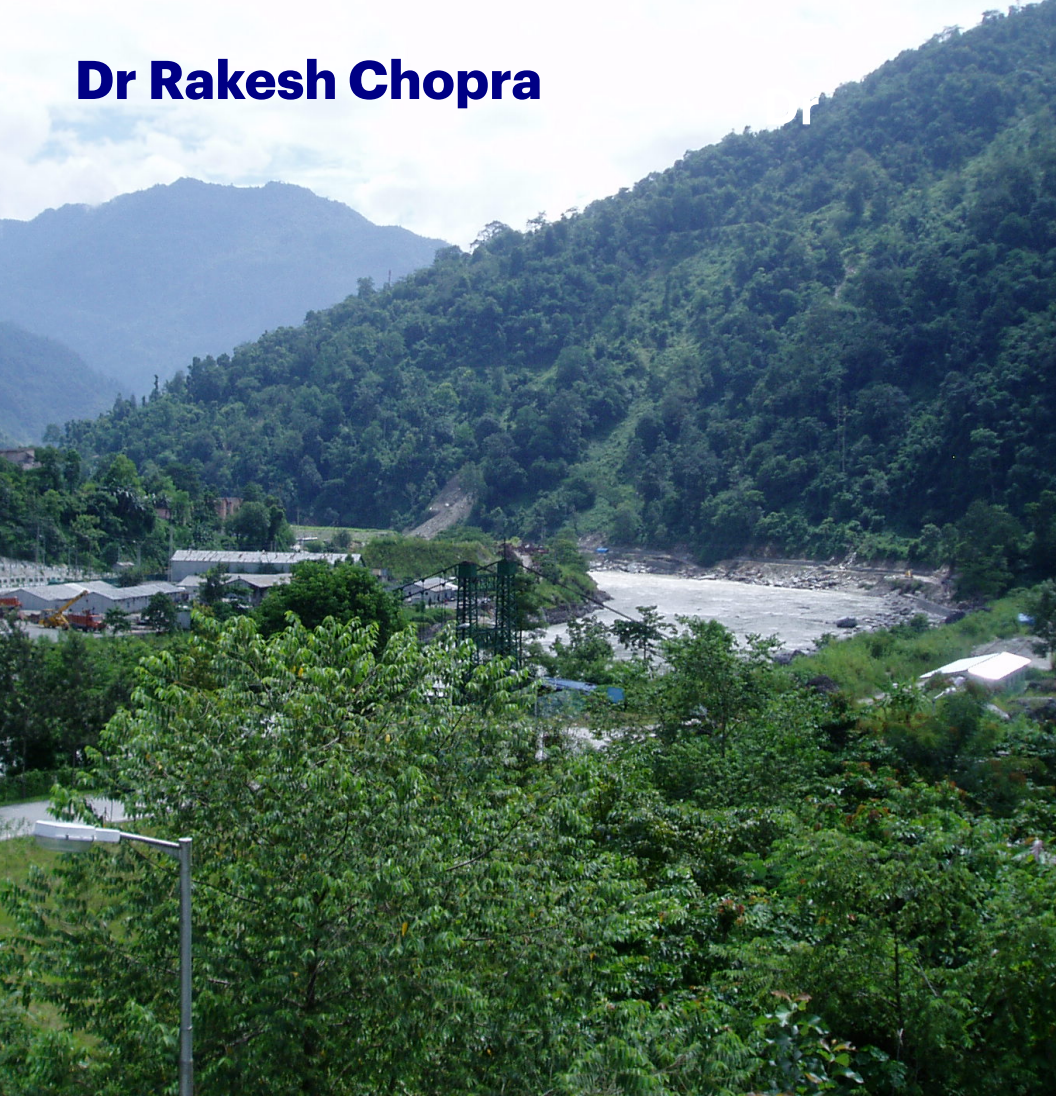


Dr Rakesh Chopra



**WHAT ARE WE
FACING,
PROBLEMS OR
SITUATIONS?**

Dr Rakesh Chopra

**WHAT ARE WE
FACING,
PROBLEMS OR
SITUATIONS?**

©Dr Rakesh Chopra

Reproduction in any manner, in whole or in part without the written consent of the author is prohibited.

All Rights Reserved.

Dr Rakesh Chopra

www.DrRakeshChopra.com

drchopra1954@gmail.com

Preface

While mentoring ambitious leaders as a Visionary Strategist, I have seen over and over that what gets in the way of the leaders achieving what they set out to in their businesses, is the feeling that stress is an integral part of life.

Life indeed is a series of situations and situations. Different people react differently to the same situation. What are you facing, problems or situations. The fact is any situation which you possibly can't manage you label it as a problem. If you focus deeply then the problem is not what is happening in the present moment but problem is the future consequences.

People are highly disturbed just by thinking on how will they manage the situation which has not yet arrived and possibly may not even arrive at all. People are reacting to the current situation and then keep on reacting to their own reactions and this chain continues, leading to the cyclone within.

The life we live is important. Just ask a question to self, "Do we really have a choice?" Nothing can be done about the past, you can't even undo what has happened. And the future has multiple options both negative and positive so why not focus on the positive options and remain balanced in your approach.

Dr Rakesh Chopra
Visionary Strategist

Explore Yourself

1. Life is full of situations and situations. Are the situations complicated by themselves or we make them look complicated?
2. Is it the right policy to blame others for your own mistakes?
3. What do you actually want from your life?
4. What should be your practical approach while dealing with your complex problems?
5. What should be your strategy to feel the depth of those situations which you have never experienced in real life?
6. Is there any escape from deeds in life?
7. Are you disturbed by the problems or their future consequences?
8. Negative feelings multiply very fast while positive feelings add up gradually. Give your opinion.
9. Has worry something to do with real life situation or is it only our imagination?
10. Any pleasure in life, once experienced leaves a restless desire to get it again. Comment.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to :

- * feel that the consequences of the problems in imagination lead to discomfort of the mind.
- * Feel that simple is always powerful while the complicated is bound to be weak.
- * know the importance of converting a negative situation into positive the moment it is felt.
- * Identify logical chain of the Stress Process.

HUMAN life is a complex phenomenon. It is observed that people are largely confused about how to manage their lives effectively. Sometimes, they feel a lot is to be achieved in life and they keep on working very hard but do not feel all that great in the process. At other times they do not want to perform as they feel that nothing is worth achieving. Whether we have some specific aim or no aim at all, still the performance continues. It is wise to get clarity about every activity one is supposed to do.

Human life is full of situations and situations only. In some situations we are thrilled while in others we feel shattered. Whether we welcome them in a happy frame of mind or reject them in desperation, there is no escape from these situations.

Something somewhere keeps on happening around us. Situations can be very simple or extremely complicated.

A simple situation practically means, no problem. While a complicated one, if not managed effectively in time, will lead to a series of uncomfortable consequences. Our need and desire are to remain comfortable and strong in life. Can we allow ourselves to remain confused and disturbed?

Is The Situation Really Complicated?

Is the situation really complicated in itself or we make it appear complicated? Had the given situation been complicated in itself then every person would have been equally affected in real life. It is not so. Some people feel highly disturbed in a widely accepted simple situation while others remain very cool and comfortable even in a so called complicated situation.

Some people are afraid of taking an injection while others feel very comfortable even about brain or heart surgery they are planning to undergo. Some people take fifteen to twenty tablets every day quite comfortably while for others even to swallow a small tablet is like experiencing hell.

Depending on one's own practical exposure to various life situations, the reaction is thus positive or negative. Many mature people can behave weak and negative while children can behave constructive and positive. At the young age normally children do not have any serious negative exposure. So the smallest positive and logical exposure will make the child feel and behave in a very strong manner.

Once an eight year old child, while coming from his school, met with an accident. He got an open wound injury in his right knee. His mother was very sensitive by nature. The child realised his responsibility and did not wish to hurt the feelings of his mother. He didn't go home but went to his family doctor and requested, "Uncle, please put stitches to my bleeding wound before my mother comes, otherwise she will cry".

The doctor was pleasantly surprised. At that tender age this much was the unexpected understanding and maturity which probably his mother did not have even at her age. After the minor surgery was done, he comfortably informed his mother.

The child, who was normally supposed to suffer and cry, was feeling very balanced and strong while the mother, who was expected to be balanced and caring was giving the opposite image. The doctor is now feeling sandwiched between the two. May be, he feels to be in a position to take the child into confidence for giving the required counselling to the mother.

In this case, the child preferred to make a simple start while his mother was feeling complicated in her mind. The way we make a start, determines reactions. The more the unsuccessful exposures we have in life the more complicated our life appears.

To become strong, it is important to have planned successful exposures, either as self initiated or provided by our seniors. A pampered child has no exposure of his own, so he feels and behaves very weak when alone. For successfully managing various life situations the age is no bar.

Should We Blame The Situation?

People keep on blaming many of the situations as highly complicated ones; the focus is rarely on understanding and developing the self. We find it comforting to blame others for our own mistakes. It is quite surprising that more of the highly educated people feel miserable in life than the uneducated ones. The vast but hazy exposure, people are getting these days is making them more and more confused and unintelligent. Many of the previous generation's successful business magnates did not receive formal education.

People focus only on gaining maximum knowledge. In the process, they simply ignore getting a deep and clear understanding of the subject concerned. When a person shares his own experiential understanding with us, we just receive it as a knowledge. It does not become our understanding. When we experience that knowledge in total depth of our respective situations, it immediately becomes our own understanding.

Whenever we plan to manage any situation with our newly acquired knowledge, it looks complicated. The unsaid fact is that we have been going through so many similar complicated situations around us. Some of which we have also managed. As a result, we confidently start the management of every situation with a complicated approach.

This way, we just end up feeling miserable and frustrated. We have put in the best of our efforts and spent lot of our precious energy; still, the results are different from the desired ones.

It can not be our fault. Centuries ago, the warriors were ruling the masses. So to generate and maintain their own importance, certain intellectuals had made things highly complicated for the common people.

Was There No Choice Left?

Was there really no choice left for us except to follow this confused body of knowledge blindly? On the whole, we lack total clarity of our individual goals. We tend to waste our precious energy in the elaborately explained complicated procedures. The unfelt tragedy of this vast system is that we remain totally unaware of this fact. Generations and generations have been following the life style of their elders. Perhaps we thought there is no other choice and we felt forced from within to adopt the complicated path.

Ask a question to self, "What do I want to get out of my life?" When we keep on asking why to every answer we get the ultimate answer would be," Because I feel good this way. " That leads to the goal of peace and happiness and that's a fact. Whether we define or it remains undefined, every person born on this earth only wants to be peaceful and happy.

Are peace and happiness possible on this path? Is it advisable to follow the complicated and the difficult to understand approach in managing various life situations or we should simply decide to use our common sense. If the complicated approach seems beneficial, we must adopt the same. But the fact is.....

Simple Is Always Powerful While Complicated Is Bound To Be Weak

Because of certain bitter experiences, people become suspicious by nature. They feel that ten persons have cheated them, they take it for sure that every body is an established cheat. Because they could not effectively manage certain situations, they conclude that no solution is available. It is a normal misconception that only self is intelligent and all others are below average. For them, it is difficult to accept anything or anybody at a simple level.

For the respective understanding and management, every situation needs a thorough in-depth assessment. Normally, people attempt to start managing only with a superficial assessment of the situation at hand. They make their ill equipped and unsuccessful effort. Then they tend to blame luck for all their failures.

Strategy To Feel The Depth

Be it a game, war, a business proposal or any social function, a well-researched strategy is necessary for its success. Before making a start, we must gain depth on how to play. When we

formulate a strategy to play and win a game, we become comfortable and strong to make a start towards victory.

Like a game of chess, before making the next move, we must feel through at least the next seven moves of our opponent. That means his would be reaction to our move and then our possible reaction to his move and so on ... If we ignore this important strategy then our defeat is almost guaranteed.

“How do we feel the depth of any positive or negative situation?” is a million dollar question. Let us feel the practical and simple-to-implement strategy. Till the relevant depth is felt on the subject, we need to live the consequences in our imagination as if those are already happening. And if we are unable to feel this way then we must learn first, on how to feel the relevant depth. For this experimental plan, let us focus on a hypothetical situation.

Suppose we wish to develop self for feeling the depth about a particular proposed business relation, i.e. the Managing Director of our client organisation. We are planning to have a joint collaboration and are scheduled to sign an agreement. If this deal is a balanced one, it can prove to be highly profitable for all times to come. If we are unable to feel future consequences before signing the agreement, it can also prove to be disastrous. Our need, on top priority, is to learn to understand the concerned designated person at the earliest because we can not afford to delay certain delicate decisions.

Our strategy to gain similar depth is, “Plan to meet ten Managing Directors of some other organisations per day for a minimum of ten days on a courtesy call.” In ten days we have

felt around one hundred persons. Isn't it? Amazingly, the time taken to feel the depth of the first person was much more than that spent on the last person. Secondly there is a world of difference between the depth we have experienced during our meeting with the first and the last person. At this stage we are very clear about the quality of questions we need to ask because only the correct and relevant information is responsible for the depth required.

Why To Perform?

We wish to develop ourselves. We are keen to justify our day to day responsibilities. We want to help our near and dear ones. We are focussing on gaining name and fame. We love somebody to the extent of showering all our resources or we hate someone to the extent of taking fatal revenge. Even if we have no plans to achieve anything specific at all, we simply cannot escape actions (conscious or even at sub-conscious level). There is no choice. The voluntary activity where we have a choice is also directing us to do something.

The path of escapism is simply not possible. On our part any attempt to escape voluntary or involuntary actions will only give a feeling of frustration.

No Escape

Similarly, when you are confronted with a realistic situation, there is no escape. A temporary escape is only a diversion for the time being. It may give a short lived satisfaction as in the old 'pigeon and cat story' wherein the pigeon closes its eyes when confronted with a cat, imagining that the cat has gone

away. Till today the cat is still smiling at the pigeon's escapist approach. The fact is that the total escape is neither practicable nor possible. Those who attempt to escape can never be peaceful as the relevant pressures keep on increasing.

In any given situation you are bound to take a decision and perform accordingly. Non performance will also lead to some situation which needs a further decision. Obviously escape is again not possible. According to the understanding and depth in one's life the same situation will mean differently to different people. The less depth we have in life, the more disturbed we will be. Of course material resources are important but not enough alone to generate peace and happiness.

Investment Capacity

Any person who has lots of money may not have the mind to invest lavishly. His visible focus is to collect and possess money. At the most he only behaves like a caretaker. At the same time, a person who is not rich can plan to invest even bigger amounts beyond his present capacity with full ease. A person who has the mind to invest, knows the value of money.

For example, if two persons have lost rupees two thousand each on the same day they will react to it differently. For one person this loss may mean nothing because he is in the habit of giving this amount to various charitable institutions as a donation every now and then. He also feels comfortable in entertaining his guests in the five-star culture. He knows the difference between an investment and wasteful expenditure. He is not possessive of money but knows how to earn money and spend it wisely. He believes in living in the present. He is

not disturbed at the said loss but is focussing his energy on how to generate more funds.

But for the other person it is his salary for the month. He has a limited exposure to life. For him it is indeed a difficult situation. If by chance on the same day, he wins a lottery of five thousand rupees, this situation no longer remains difficult for him. Then he becomes immediately comfortable. In life, whenever you are unable to manage a difficult situation, you normally refer to that as a problem.

Consequences Are The Problem

In fact, the problem is not the realistic loss of money but the consequences attached to it. How to pay the rent of the house? The children will demand money to pay the school fees, otherwise the teacher will ask them to keep standing in the class or the principal may take a decision to strike off their names from the school. His ailing wife needs medical care. How can she be admitted to a nursing home? How will he manage to pay her medical bills? Next week is the marriage of cousin. Oh yes there is a contributory party in the office too. He will feel highly embarrassed to face all those people who will come to collect monthly bills.

If his boss immediately sanctions him an advance of the same amount, to be returned in the next five years, again there is no problem. Loss of money or unacceptable action is not the problem. Even on the death of someone people normally weep and feel disturbed over the loss of those certain benefits they were getting from the deceased. Only the consequences are the problem and not the loss of money or the person.

Feeling Of Fear

Normally, whenever one is unable to find a viable and easy-to-implement solution to one's problems, a feeling of fear comes into the mind. Nothing untoward has happened but the person is literally trembling from within as if he has been caught red handed and fully exposed. A feeling of unmanageable guilt has entered his already disturbed mind. He starts giving irrelevant justification to what he feels would have happened.

People around him have a specific image about his personality and behaviour. They are feeling confused about what he is talking. They never experienced him in that state of mind. Their negative and confused reaction to what he is doing is quite natural. An ill conceived negative chain starts in the understanding of that person and people in his circle. Now something visibly negative has happened in the reaction of others. Because of this chain reaction, he further starts getting a feeling that now almost everybody knows the worst that has happened to him.

He is making it a point to avoid all those concerned people and situations. He is withdrawing into his own shell, feeling as if nobody understands him. All this has completely blocked his mind. He feels very lonely and totally cut off the world and his surroundings. The tragedy is, as yet nothing negative has happened and the poor fellow is feeling miserable. He is losing control over himself and could not manage as desired. Perhaps he is not aware that.....

Negative Feelings Multiply Very Fast While Positive Feelings Add Up Gradually

Once the negative process starts, the situation simply goes out of control. Many people claim and act to remain positive but it takes time before they become fully positive. Because one is trained to live and accept the negative, it actually becomes very difficult for a person to initiate the constructively positive track.

Let us take the case of an animal. While going on a lonely road, a person comes across a dog staring at him. The immediate reaction is that this dog might bite him. Surprisingly the dog also is developing similar feelings while looking at the person. Both the parties start with the same negative feelings. In the process of defending, both prepare to attack each other. As they come closer, the dog starts barking and the person picks up a stone. Throughout, both are under the firm grip of panic. The person throws the stone at the dog, in response the dog jumps and literally bites the person.

This never happens if the person does not start the first negative feeling. We can just pass by the dog and the dog is equally comfortable. When we are not sure of self and attempt to start with a positive note, it requires lot of courage to pass through that area smoothly.

Fear — Worry — Fear

As time passes one feels future consequences in one's imagination. At a very fast pace one is coming under the grip of fear. Initially, there is a small bout of fear. This fear is just a reflex action from a very weak and negative base. It is not very difficult to come out of that state. The negative process has just begun, so initially there is a feeling that fear is going away but the fact is it is just diluting its effect temporarily. One remains in the grip of a mild attack of fear known as WORRY.

When the state of worry continues for some time, the negative feelings silently keep on multiplying and there is one more attack of fear. Again, the intensity of fear becomes diluted leading to the state of worry again. The fear and worry supplement and complement each other. This chain "fear-worry-fear" goes on becoming more and more powerful.

Only In One's Imagination

Worry exists only in one's imagination and never in reality. The grip of fear becomes very powerful with continuous multiplication of negative feelings and one accepts the negative imagination as something real. It is our choice to feel anything in imagination. We can feel positive or negative. The reality is that we have the freedom to experience any feeling. Normally we tend to start from the negative. It looks that the negative is bound to happen. I am not so lucky to receive the positive. We have forgotten all the positive in the past but the negative remains very much alive in our memory.

In reality, nothing has happened. Sometimes a person will mistake a rope for a snake in the dark. Similarly one is feeling self generated highly charged but baseless negative imagination as real and gets panicky. It is impossible to fight with nothing in front. The more one makes efforts to fight the more frustrated one becomes. It is an unmanageable clash of imagination with reality thus leading to a disturbed mind.

Let us take the situation of a happily married young couple. The husband is normally reaching home at 6 PM on the dot. The wife eagerly starts waiting for him for the evening tea much earlier than that. One day the bell does not ring at 6 PM as expected. She starts feeling uncomfortable. Some irrelevant doubts enter her mind.

May be he has been attracted to some other girl. No, no, it is not possible God cannot be cruel to me. The time now is 8 PM. Still he has not come. Many ideas keep on disturbing her. Nothing was clearly coming to her mind. The door bell has rung two to three times in between but it was somebody else. She felt disappointed.

She suddenly realises, " Oh yes, it could only be an accident." She feels horrible from within. She starts perspiring heavily. It cannot happen. I am worshiping God daily. God is very kind to me. She starts her evening prayers. Now it is 10 PM. Still there are no signs of his coming home. No message even.

What could have happened? It is certainly a very serious accident. May be he is..... No, I do not agree with this feeling of mine. Only a year ago we were married. It is not possible but this much late. May be he is no more.

It is 12 midnight and suddenly the door bell rings. She trembles from within so is unable to move. How can she open the door? The bell rings again and again. With lot of difficulty she opens the door and is deeply shocked to see her husband alive. In her imagination she had accepted that the worst had already happened. So it was difficult for her to come out of that situation. She was totally numb for a couple of minutes..

It is indeed an unmanageable heavy clash of reality with imagination. The circumstances over the years have trained the human mind to escape from the present. People can only predict the future but nobody can ever be sure of the future. Whatsoever has come even in expert's imagination may not happen. The negative chain in our imagination is so strong that even the strongest person also feels trapped and weak. He feels compelled to escape from reality.

Whenever we accept in imagination that the worst has already happened then any advice from any body carries no meaning. The fact is that advice is coming from the present base while imagination has gone far away from the present. The two do not match. The badly trapped person strongly feels that there is no solution to his situation. That is also true. There is no solution to what does not exist.

Now clearly fear, along with worry, builds up an increasing pressure in the imagination. Imagination is very powerful. We can give any track to our mind and it runs on that negative or positive track accordingly. Imagination is mostly an emotional state of mind so it can easily divert a person on the unrealistic negative path. Because the speed of mind in that direction is increasing constantly, it becomes difficult for any body to stop

that negative path. Under these circumstances the control becomes almost impossible.

As negative feelings multiply very fast the person tends to link the ultimate negative point with the starting point. He develops a wrong feeling that the same point has just been magnified but the fact is he has gone far away from where he began. In the beginning he also had a positive choice but now the negative has overpowered him. The negative grip has become very strong. When imagination appears close to reality it attains a level of pressure which cannot save the mind from disturbance.

This highly charged negative imagination puts pressure on the person called STRESS. This pressure can also be because of any direct problem being faced in the present. If we limit the problem only to the present situation, the required control remains. Again at the sub conscious level, one starts feeling the future consequences. Any person under stress is not feeling normal and balanced. Is this pressure life long? You must have experienced that....

Nothing But CHANGE Is Permanent

So this highly uncomfortable state also needs an escape. Let us understand this concept with the help of an inflated balloon. We can compare the balloon with a human being. The pressure

you put on the balloon is the stress which leads to some changes on and in the balloon. Newton's third law of motion states "Action and reaction are equal and opposite".

The actual pressure we are exerting on the balloon will have an equal and opposite reaction. The body of the balloon will show some changes and even the inside pressure will be affected. Stress has an equivalent effect on the human mind and body. Before actual pressure is exerted on the mind a feeling of fear may come about the harmful effects of that stress. Reaction also starts in one's imagination.

If the strongly negative situation is accepted in one's imagination there will be an equal and opposite reaction as that of the actual. As long as the negative remains only in imagination, the harmful effects are not unbearable but the moment it becomes reality, escape is very difficult.

Generating Tension

As we understand, stress generates a pressure within the mind, commonly known as TENSION. The balloon also in that state of tension does not look appealing. Depending on the level of stress, tension builds up accordingly. The more the stress, more is the tension leading to more discomfort. We do not want to live an uneasy life. It is shocking to know that people love to live in tension. They feel there is no other choice. If they are not aware of what is present that does not mean that it does not exist. They prefer to remain blind to this fact. As if they have married to worry which has become a part of life and tension is their own baby who needs proper pampering. How can they live without it?

Many people want only a male child. When a female child is born, instead of happily accepting they tend to blame the mother or even God. Their whole life is filled with hatred and suffering. They link their male child with a false feeling of status. He can be a would be partner in business, a caretaker in old age or even keeping the family name alive. The male child, at the time of need, may not give the ultimate comfort.

The focus of majority of people is only on feeling the depth of pleasures. It is very important to know and feel the difference between pleasures and happiness. Worldly pleasures are always short lived while the happiness can be permanent. In this world every material pleasure once experienced will make us more and more restless to experience it again.

Any pleasure that leads to sufferings, cannot be a pleasure and is far from happiness. We must focus on peace and happiness. If we do not know the right path towards a life full of peace and happiness, it does not mean that the option of the right path does not exist. Tension, once experienced, will initiate multiplication of negative feelings.

The Visible Strain

The effect of stress on the body is called Strain. When we tell somebody not to over strain, we generally refer to physical aspect only. Whenever the mind is tense, the muscles are equally affected. The strained expressions are clearly visible on the face and other parts of the body. We have a limited store of energy and it is very precious. When the muscles are involved energy is diverted towards the body muscles and is wasted. We feel weak and lethargic.

Just before any examination, when not fully prepared, people normally tremble. The focus is on the body and is a true expression of strain. Examination is not only academic. At every stage in life every situation is indeed an examination. Many a time the situation at hand does not need any specific physical involvement but the stress that leads to tension will have an equal effect on the body as strain. The body muscles need energy and in the process we feel physically weak.

Similarly the mind also needs energy to remain tense. Here the energy is diverted towards the mind and is again wasted. As a result we experience an overall fatigue. As the negative multiplies very fast, we are moving towards an undesirable serious situation of continuously increasing tension and strain.

Let us learn to arrest the negative, the moment it comes and convert that into the positive, so that the most precious step i.e. our initiative is never blocked.

UNMANAGEABLE SITUATION

PROBLEM

FEAR

WORRY

STRESS

TENSION — STRAIN

Activity

Purpose

To understand the strategy to feel the depth of those important situations which you have never experienced in real life?

What To Do

After feeling your ultimate goal in life, identify the areas where you need to feel the depth for your development and control.

[illegible]

Purpose

To understand that negative feelings multiply very fast while positive feelings add up gradually.

What To Do

Identify ten situations from your past where your initial negative feelings had multiplied in totally irrelevant directions. Feel the loss which could have been saved.

[illegible]

Purpose

To know the importance of converting negative into positive the moment it is felt.

What To Do

Identify ten negative situations from self and others' experiences. Plan how will you convert these negative into positive.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

LEADING TO THE CYCLONE WITHIN

Explore Yourself

1. While encountering a stressful situation do you feel like fighting, escaping or what other plans you have in mind?
2. When a typical situation converts into a stress cyclone, the digestive system slows down or even stops altogether, the salivary glands dry up, the blood vessels in the kidneys & the whole of abdomen constrict and the immune system which deals with body infection, becomes less active. Why?
3. As per your personal experience what is the difference between acute and chronic stress situations.
4. Out of acute and chronic stress situations which one you feel is easy to manage. Why?
5. Why, at times the performance doesn't match the direction of the goal resulting in general level of visible 'under performance', which, of course, can lead to feelings of guilt, self-doubt and insecurity?

6. Stress leads to tension which indeed is a silent killer then how do people still survive for many years, of course in a fluctuating state of life?
7. How can you prevent yourself from stress linked collapse resulting in some disease?



Learning Objectives

Through these pages, you will be able to :

- * Get clarity that the fight or flight mechanism is the beginning of the stress cyclone and if not managed in time can cause great damage to the body & mind.
- * Understand and manage the adaptation stage of body's reaction to the stress cyclone.
- * Feel the possible dangers of the exhaustion stage of body's reaction to the stress cyclone.

THE human body needs total harmony. Whenever there is a threat to the body some automatic defence mechanism is always available to counter the threat. Whether the demands on body are generated internally or externally, the body strives to be efficient constantly. It further strives to attain an equilibrium in which the various bodily systems work harmoniously in response to the demands made on them.

When such demands become potentially harmful to the body, they are generally called stress factors.

These range from such obvious stimuli as excessive noise, heat or cold, overwork, overburdening family or business commitments, and even some well-defined or undefined internal worries such as imagined threats or fears that result from prolonged anxiety. If we can identify how our body will react to stress then the possibility of managing it becomes more clear.

No two persons will react similarly to the same situation. The reaction depends on one's exposure in the past and training to understand and manage the future. Accordingly, the reaction to these stress factors is different. No doubt people wish to remain calm and happy but that is not possible they have developed wrong or negative habits to deal with every situation they come across.

Fight or Flight Reaction

Based on one's personality, whatever the stress factor, the body's response follows a predictable pattern. This response has been called the 'fight or flight' reaction because the body is preparing either to fight or to run away. It is the beginning of stress cyclone. Along with a rapid increase in metabolism, hormonal, physiological and biochemical changes take place instantaneously.

During the 'fight or flight' phase the muscles of the body become tense, as if preparing to save the cyclone. The part of the brain which is called hypothalamus is a coordinating centre

for multitude of body functions not normally under voluntary control. It receives an alarm message and calls into play the hormonal function of the master gland, the pituitary. The hormones produced by the pituitary gland now mobilise other areas producing hormones, notably the adrenal glands, which release adrenaline and noradrenaline to keep the 'fight or flight' reaction going. These bring about a series of physiological changes that are essential for any specific activity to take place in response to the stress stimulus.

For proper functioning muscles need glucose. The liver responds to this by releasing some of its store into the bloodstream, which carries it to the muscles. Glucose has to be transformed into energy so the blood also carries the necessary oxygen. Thus heart has to pump harder for blood to reach parts where it's most needed, which leads to a rise in blood pressure. Breathing becomes faster, so the lungs can take in extra oxygen.

As the amount of blood in the body is limited, it has to be diverted to the priority areas; muscles, heart, lungs, kidneys and the brain. Consequently, there's a temporary 'shutdown' in other areas; for example, the digestive system slows down or stops altogether, the salivary glands dry up, the blood vessels in the kidneys and the abdomen constrict, the immune system, which deals with body infection, becomes less active.

All this is appropriate if the stress factor is best dealt with by physical action. For instance, if the source of stress is a hostile dog running towards you, you'll need all the help your body can give, and fast, as you dash for safety. Once you're safe, the body swiftly reverses the process and no harm is done.

But today, physical responses such as running away may not be appropriate. For how long and how much we can do it? When the whole complex mechanism is brought into play repeatedly, our body and mind finds difficulty in resolving stress. Acute situations may seem easy to manage but obviously in chronic situations

Fight Or Flight Mechanism Can Cause Great Damage To The Body

Although the 'fight or flight' reaction has been part of man's survival kit throughout history and has enabled those equipped with the best response to survive, it hasn't adapted itself to the more subtle forms of stress reaction required in a modern competitive society.

Adaptation Stage

When stressful situations occur repeatedly over a long period without resolution, a second stage of stress, the adaptation stage, is reached. Many of the changes that took place in the

acute 'fight or flight' phase become chronic, they take place all the time, so that they're working against, rather than for, us. The negative under these circumstances is becoming permanent.

The tendency of high blood pressure (hypertension) becoming permanent is greater because of the compulsive maintenance of constricted blood vessels. Even circulatory problems involving the heart may start to appear. When stress arousal occurs our digestive system also functions more slowly or stops altogether. There is a tendency in the adaptation, or chronic, phase to develop such conditions as stomach or duodenal ulceration, colitis, diarrhoea or constipation. Chronic muscular tensions can also produce a multitude of musculoskeletal aches and pains as well as severe headaches. The sustained or repetitive stress stimulus impairs the working of the body's defence mechanisms, which makes infection and allergic symptoms more likely. The likelihood of nervous symptoms such as nervousness and phobias also becomes greater.

The fact remains that one is mentally used to a previous specific and established system of operation. During the adaptation phase there is a dramatic contrast between what the individual intends to achieve and what the now malfunctioning system is capable of achieving. All planning is done based on the past system while there is a totally un-matching present base for performance.

When goal and performance don't match, there is a general level of 'under performance', which can, of course, lead to feelings of guilt, self-doubt, insecurity etc. Under these circumstances the effort put in is much less than the effort

required. Intentions are clear but confusion prevails throughout performance. Visible job performance declines, libido will often disappear and personal relationships are strained.

All of this creates further stress at a time when the person is least able to cope with it. One feels confused about what is happening. By the time he is in some position to identify what has happened, more stress has already set in, leading to more confusion. There is an overlapping of confusing situations and one finds oneself in its firm grip. In spite of repeated efforts the results are not coming. Ultimately, one feels compelled even to accept that there is no other choice for him. He has to live his life in misery only. In the past when he could do many jobs with full ease now looks impossible to him. One always feels ready with some irrelevant excuse like, "I have now grown old. My father is not with me to give me support. Modern technologies have changed. My children don't listen to me, " and so on.

Just how long this phase can go on without a major mental or physical breakdown depends upon many factors. Some of these can be inherited constitutional factors; basic health habits such as diet and exercise; and the degree of emotional support provided by the family and friends.

The adaptation phase can last 10, 15 or 20 years, or it may be brief, depending on many different factors, such as the ones mentioned above. When health is properly maintained with a balanced diet and regular exercise, human resistance is increased and the same force of stress will not be harmful to the same extent. Anybody who has a constant emotional support from family members and close dependable friends preserves a

strong mental base. Similarly, people who have attained spiritual depth of life are not moved by any amount of pressures from any source. If the positive is strong and dominant, the negative automatically tends to disappear.

Exhaustion Stage

Nobody wants to feel exhausted but the focus on managing and coming out of the worsening adaptation stage is totally missing. No solution is possible without initiation of action in the right direction. Sometimes, people are aware of the source of resources to help them feel comfortable but they are reluctant to make an effort to get them for their benefit. Their hesitation becomes a curse on them. If action can be taken at the adaptation stage to alter either the stress factors or the reactions to them, then the final exhaustion phase can still be avoided.

However, if action is not taken before the adaptation phase ends then the exhaustion phase follows. At this stage the body is no longer in a position to cope; so it collapses into disease of one form or another. Once the disease sets in the resistance of body and mind is lowered, thus inviting various dangers. Being able to recognise the signs and symptoms of stress and knowing how to escape from the vicious acute adaptation-exhaustion spiral is, therefore, of the utmost importance.

Activity

Purpose

Get clarity that the fight or flight mechanism can cause great damage to the body & mind.

What To Do

Make a list of ten past situations when you had experienced fight or flight reactions. Which way you can plan to manage similar situations again?

[illegible]

Purpose

To develop understanding on how to manage the adaptation stage of body's reaction to stress.

What To Do

Plan to meet ten persons who are undergoing the adaptation stage. What will be your advice to these persons?

[illegible]

THE LIFE WE LIVE

Explore Yourself

1. Challenge is normally taken as a feeling of guaranteed success which prevents the mind from becoming negative. There can also be a false feeling of this guaranteed success leading to unexpected consequences.
2. In life, experience alone can't make you an authority on Stress Management. Should you learn to simply ignore, overcome or accept stress as a part of living or identify planned efforts to manage it?
3. If the choice is to select only one. Would you prefer to live with acute stress situations or the chronic stress situations? Why?
4. Which way would you plan to improve the quality of your life?
5. Do you really want to manage stress or you are too much identified with the stressful life style?
6. In your surroundings identify the sources from where the stress comes in your life.
7. What is the reason that inspite of their best management skills many people in life are also not peaceful & happy?

Learning Objectives

Through these pages, you will be able to :

- * Feel that accepting stress as a challenge may not give you positive and balanced feelings.
- * Know the importance of acute and chronic stress responses in the life you live.
- * Understand how to improve quality of life.
- * Develop understanding on various stress factors of your life.

THROUGHOUT the world, stress has literally become a household word. Even a child today talks about stress. How does it affect us? How can we recognise stress in our life? Sometimes, without understanding the true meaning of stress, we often say, " Put more stress on this issue " or " Don't put stress. " This indeed is a planned action within our control. It is basically focussing on an identified force.

Let us see what does the word stress stand for in our mind. Is it something positive or the beginning of an extremely negative track or just neutral? If it is positive there is nothing to worry about. It is a moment of celebration. But if it is negative it can prove to be delicate and dangerous. Better be careful.

By now, we know that negative feelings multiply very fast and must be tackled the moment they are felt; otherwise, the fatal is

destined to happen. Even if the visibly so called most balanced personalities once go negative, it becomes very difficult for them to return to the positive. Should I live with the feeling that I am the most intelligent person in this world, that I can and I will manage every odd situation of my life? Or should I consider myself as one of the countless people in this world who are committing mistakes every day?

Inspite of the fact that the negative aspect of stress can be dangerous, majority of people take stress as something positive. They feel that the negative will not happen to them, it is meant only for others. Is it ever possible ? Every person in life has encountered various 'difficult' and 'not so difficult' problems without escape. It is just a reflection of the same old feeling " People die but I will not ". We are never prepared for our own death or any other extreme negative to happen to us.

Is Stress A Challenge?

The positive aspect of stress is normally considered as challenge which fills people with the energy to perform. Challenge gives a feeling of guaranteed success and prevents the mind from becoming negative. Challenge is always an emotional expression. It is not an asset as it is generally taken to be but, if not properly handled, can be easily converted into a permanent liability. There can also be a false feeling of the so called guaranteed success leading to unexpected consequences.

If the feeling of challenge is not logically well defined and accepted then, during performance, the track of success can be

easily lost. Even a slight deviation at the initial stage will take the person far away from the planned destination in the long run. There is a delicate but variable line of demarcation between the expected positive and negative aspects of stress. Our emotional track keeps on fluctuating because of the invisible and uncontrollable entry of certain problematic situations. This automatically disturbs the level and position of this line. Because this line does not remain stable, we can't be sure of positive outcome.

People normally feel that to perform, certain amount of pressure is always required. Pressure is an emotional expression but when it is logically directed it becomes a force which is positive. Force has a penetrating effect on the well defined target towards success. But it again should be relevant to the need. More force applied than required one, can prove to be even disastrous or at least leads to lot of wastage.

Demands Of Life

Stress has many meanings, but most people take stress to be the demands of life. Technically, these demands are called "stress factors," and the actual wear and tear on our bodies is the stress. The demands or challenges of life can come from people and events around us, as well as from our inner thoughts and struggles. When these demands increase, people often feel that they are under excessive stress.

One of our goals is to present better ways not only to learn to live with stressful situations but also to find more enjoyment in meeting and logically mastering the challenges of our changing world. Change indeed is a supporting part of our life . We

might feel bored if we were forced to spend our days sitting in an easy chair. We are bound to face many stressful situations every day. At the same time we need to live life successfully. We must identify our stress responses and then decide to learn tested techniques to deal with them. When we live successfully in a stressful world, we will be neither over stressed nor under stressed. This neutral but visibly non-negative situation of life will keep us on the track of peace and happiness.

Most people are not aware of their minute-to-minute stress responses. Our responses to stress situations are not techniques and concepts learned by feeling the depth of life. By and large, these are results of trial and error methods. Experience alone can not make us an authority on Stress Management. For better or worse, we learn to ignore, overcome, or accept these as part of living. What are these important stress responses?

Acute Stress Responses

At times, we are all too aware of how stress affects us. Have you ever felt that your stomach was " full of butterflies "? May be you had a lump in your throat, or your chest felt tight. Perhaps your pulse raced and your heart pounded. You may have felt pain in your neck and shoulders because of tension.

We have all heard of "Examination Fever". Is the fever real or the unbearable effect of stress? We face some very difficult situation which can be a job interview, a school or college examination, appearance in a court of law or even encountering a typical family conflict situation. The body temperature remains normal but the body doesn't. One has body ache, feels nervous throughout, complains of having

diarrhoea, doesn't like the slightest noise and even starts blaming every body for every fault of his own.

During such a situation, may be we felt sweaty or all wound up; thoughts may have raced through our mind. But when someone asked us a question, the mind went blank. We felt totally confused as to what has happened to us. We have been proved to be very intelligent at number of occasions. We have handled many debates and won many gold medals. Many people at this time blame the growing old age and accept that the memory has faded away. Once such negative thoughts come they multiply very fast.

Can we remember getting upset and having any of these responses? Most of us have experienced some of these feelings at one time or another.

Chronic Stress Responses

The acute stress response normally does not disturb people much because they get back to normal soon. The acute stress responses are physical or behavioural level warning signs. When stress is unduly prolonged and becomes chronic, the short term warnings become more serious stress responses. To overcome the harmful effects of stress, some people work longer and harder but actually become less productive. For many, the words " I don't have time because I am surrounded by so many responsible assignments " become a way of life. They feel proud of this kind of status but the fact is, it is an attempt to escape.

Dangerous stress disorders can follow changes in the way we feel and act. As an ultimate effect, some people become withdrawn or depressed. They feel afraid of coming out of their shell. The pressures are increasing moment by moment and time is running out. The situation is getting from bad to worse.

Smoking and drinking may become problems. One's sexual life may suffer. Pain associated with headaches, arthritis and other chronic disease may increase. Some people eat more and gain weight, while others eat less and lose weight. Sleeplessness and over sleeping may become problems. Day dreaming and difficulties with concentration are common. Feelings of suspiciousness, worthlessness, inadequacy or rejection may become prominent.

Too many of us have some of these experiences too much of the time. We find ourselves anticipating the worst and being unduly nervous before anything has happened. We may not recognise how our personality has changed. Even if the changes are pointed out to us, we may not believe we have changed.

A wealthy industrialist was blessed with a son after ten long years of marriage. He had done a lot of hard work to become rich. He was feeling proud of himself for all the achievements of his life. He was very keen that his only son should become his successor. He must take over his entire business empire.

Surprisingly, his son was least interested in business. To generate his interest he planned to give him exposure to all the luxuries. Any desire he expressed was immediately fulfilled. The way son grew up his word became the law. He never experienced any problem.

One day the father decided to give business exposure to his son. He was made to visit the office and the factory. There he came across a number of people who were suffering from poverty, disease or various business and family conflicts. He had never experienced any negative in life. He felt disturbed. He went on a long drive to find an escape from his disturbed feelings.

Far away from his place he met with an accident. The angry crowd surrounded him. There was nobody to defend him. He felt highly uncomfortable. He also accepted in his imagination that the worst was going to happen. He went into deep shock. He felt lifeless and the father was helpless. Balanced exposure of life negative and positive can only make a person mature to lead a good life.

Notice that no matter where stress comes from, if the short term effects occur intensely and frequently, the long term costs are the same, the quality of life suffers. What is the benefit of living the life without the life itself in it? Perhaps we can't change circumstances or our doing something around us may not be practically possible. On the other hand, if we increase and refine our skills of understanding, life and health actually improve.

Improve Quality Of Life

Refine Your Understanding Skills

We normally invite problems in life because of lack of understanding of various life situations. First of all we must evolve a strategy to understand ourselves, others and every situation of life, then gain competence and, with regular controlled practice, develop skill. This way our understanding skills will be gradually refined and quality of life improved.

Where Does Stress Come From ?

We define stress factors broadly as external demands of life or the internal attitudes and thoughts. Stress factors can include conflict with spouse, traffic jams, pollution in the city, that fifth cup of coffee, the pushy salesman who will not take no for an answer, or the angry boss. Stress factors can also include the work that never seems to get done, the children who never seem to obey, or the way some people put themselves deep down for their shortcomings.

Notice that some of these stress factors come from our unavoidable surroundings and other from our inner struggles. Some stress factors come from both sources.

Many elements contribute to stress factors becoming stressful. There are certainly individual differences among us. "You can't make a racehorse out of a turtle." How much control we have over the stress factors and whether we feel we have a choice in our exposure to them will determine our response. If we "have to" work late because the boss "ordered us," for example, we will respond differently than if we "choose to" work late because we wanted to finish the project and take the weekend off. The fine compatibility between a person's background, aspirations, interests and his/her work will also determine how stressful the work seems.

Focussing on stress factors in different categories will help us become more aware of the varieties of stress in our life. As we feel the brief descriptions that follow, imagine an average day and consider how each stress factor may be reducing our enjoyment of life.

Emotional Disturbances

Emotions are responsible for all the pleasures and the sufferings of life. Only emotions make us feel on top of the world and emotions alone make us feel shattered. May be we are not aware that human emotions are within our own control. If we don't exercise control over any project then loss is almost guaranteed. Many of the emotional stress factors we experience are not even relevant to our respective lives.

Emotional stress factors include the fears and anxieties with which we struggle: Can we prevent a nuclear war? What if we run out of petrol? What if I lose my job? What will happen if the government changes? Additional emotional stress factors include worrying about unpaid bills, or taking an examination etc.

The messages we silently give ourselves about our actions and the actions of others are also emotional stress factors. Telling ourselves how "awful" we are going to do in some activity is an emotional stress factor that may lead to poor performance. On the other hand, consistently denying that we need to be prepared and "do our homework" may also be an emotional stress factor and can lead to failure. Both being afraid of tomorrow and procrastinating today's activities can trigger stress responses.

Each individual has a unique set of emotional stress factors. Some of them may seem contradictory. One person may not be concerned if bills are paid late but may be very concerned if his girl friend is not on time. Another person may be very upset about paying a bill late but hardly concerned if his girl friend is not on time.

Family Responsibilities

Interactions with our family members can be stressful because of the rising conflicts in the system. Each person's demands are increasing day by day. Over the years, family structure also has been changing drastically. The institution of marriage was once a strong, supportive force that could help family members cope with other stress factors. Now, the number of marriages ending

in divorce is on the rise and many children born in the last decade will spend at least a part of their youth in homes with only one parent.

Leaving apart the conflicts, the families go through various stages of stress even otherwise. The birth of a child places new demands for adaptation on a family. Immediately after birth the normal sleep for the parents is no more a routine matter. If the child falls ill, peace is totally gone. Even to changing the nappies, putting the child to sleep or playing and talking to the non verbal child needs professional training altogether.

Parents don't want their children to enjoy all those situations what they had experienced in their times. The burning desire of growing teenagers for independence can lead to conflict between parent and child. The younger generation is full of enthusiasm but lacks maturity. Even many parents are not trained to deal with the growing problems of adolescence.

Finally, families must learn to cope with ageing parents and grandparents. When every body is healthy, life seems to be comfortable. But old age itself is a disease. There are many routine problems attached to old age. The old can sometimes behave in a childishly immature way which is difficult to accept because in the past he has been proved to be very mature, intelligent and balanced. One is normally not prepared to live with this kind of atmosphere.

Social Need

This involves interaction with other people. Getting your work done, asking a person for an appointment, pressure for public

speaking, sudden outbursts of anger or compulsion to extend care are common stress factors. Attending parties may be a source of enjoyment for one person but may be stressful for the person who likes quiet evenings at home. On the other hand, the outgoing person may find staying at home very stressful.

Even the strong feeling to maintain a dignified social status itself can lead to stress. From self identification as the topper in one community, we get ourselves also identified as belonging to a particular community in our society. For getting acceptance at a wider level there is an inner need for recognition, say as the favourite leader of the group. Still, many people feel isolated, and chronically strive to find a feeling of social support. Social stress factors vary widely from person to person. What brings relief from one stress for one person may contribute to the stress of another person.

Fear Of Change

Every person has his own limits of absorbing change. In this century the rate of change has been accelerating at a speed previously unimaginable. As most people are not attuned to the concept of change, they find difficulty in accepting change. Change for good or bad, both are equally disturbing. Imagine any person getting sudden jump in his career. From the position of a manager in one department, he gets opportunity to become company's Managing Director. As he is not developed to adjust to that position, he feels disturbed and, really not happy.

We experience stress when anything important in life is changed. When we leave a job, a house or a relationship, part

of our adjustment to our loss or to our new situation involves stress. When we move from one part of the country or city to another, we experience the change of uprooting. Loss of our social network and supports can be very stressful.

Chemical Reactions

Chemical stressors may include any drug a person abuses, such as alcohol. Chemical stressors also include the pesticides or sweeteners in foods we eat. Caffeine is a common chemical stressor. Nicotine in tobacco is another. Most drugs, both those that are sold under prescription and those that are sold over the counter are chemical stressors.

We freely choose to ingest most chemical stressors. At the same time some chemical stressors are less under our control. For example, we may live in a city where we drink chemicals in the water. Likewise, many foods, particularly processed ones, have chemical additives. We may ingest large quantities of alcohol or smoke. Even non smokers also can't escape smoke. In parties, offices, smokers are contributing silently towards the harmful effects of smoking.

Work Pressures

Work stressors are tensions and pressures we usually experience between nine and five o'clock at our place of work. If you are a homemaker, your hours may be longer. Asking the boss for a raise, trying to meet impossible deadlines, working late hours, explaining an embarrassing mistake, disciplining your children, or cleaning the floor a second time to remove fresh mud tracks are all work stressors. Where ever we live and

any work we do, if not properly understood and managed, will lead to work pressures.

Work stressors, like social stressors, differ from person to person. One person may work well under pressure of deadlines and find slow periods boring and stressful. Another person may get uptight and stressed when given a deadline.

Some jobs generally involve more work stressors than others. Did you know that secretaries suffer more from stress than executives do, as measured by the incidence of such stress-related problems as heart disease, high blood pressure, ulcers, and nervous disorders? We believe the changing nature of our working world is a major contributor to stress. Even long back people didn't know everyone on their staff by first name. And now businesses have mushroomed and, frequently, have hierarchies of managers. Most of us have little personal contact with our "real" boss whom we may find it frustrating even to meet or communicate our needs. The "home office" or the "corporation" often acquire identities of their own; but how do you discuss your needs with the "home office" or the "corporation"?

Now a days the sexual composition of the work force is also changing. Nearly 50 percent of women are now in jobs. This group includes half of all the mothers with school-age children. Economists predict that over the next ten years, the number of working women will increase, and six women will enter the work force for every five men. Working women do not have only the responsibility of their job, but they also have household commitments. Family members keep on expecting care and attention from her but she is under great pressure.

Other changes have occurred in the working world. Fifty percent of the working force is white-collar. Fewer jobs are linked to end products such as merchandise or food. It has become more and more difficult to see the value of our individual contributions.

The importance of work stress in predicting life span was demonstrated in a government task force study on longevity and the work force. The study found that more than any measure of physical health such as the use of tobacco, or genetic inheritance, the number one factor in longevity in this country is work satisfaction.

Rational Decisions

It has become more and more difficult to make decisions both on and off the job. Rational decisions depend on our ability to predict the consequences of our actions. Now our ability to make the best predictions is often compromised by more alternatives and less decision time. A good example of vocational decision stress is reflected in the occupational alternatives available to us.

Now the number of choices we have is overwhelming. A brief look at the thousands of jobs available confirms the potential for confusion. Decision stress on the job is also increasing. Certain jobs, these days, carry too much responsibility with too little authority. People normally experience ambiguity and conflicting job demands. Predictability and control in our rapidly changing world culture are increasingly unattainable. There are more possibilities to consider, but humans have only a limited capacity to receive, process and then retain

information. If you plan to push beyond certain limits, your stress response may sound an alarm.

As part of human nature, people feel very comfortable to identify themselves with what so ever they come across. They get identified with the parents, spouse, children, relations, a particular house, company, city, state, country, continent and even the world. They also get themselves identified with their job, business, car, computer, and even the smallest possible things like pen and hairstyle etc.

When a person gets promotion normally he feels very happy. But, at the same time, he is confused and highly uncomfortable. He gets so much identified with his previous designation and responsibility that even two years after the promotion he still retains his old identity.

When people change their house or even the job, they feel highly disturbed because they have been too much identified with the people around. The main problem is how to cope in an unfamiliar environment.

In a life time people normally take a maximum of ten steps e.g. getting married, promotion or shifting a house etc. etc. Every step taken gives them a combination of confused pleasures and sufferings. Our life is not only ten steps. If full life is taken as hundred years, imagine the number of months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, seconds or even the moments we are really living. Are just ten steps sufficient? Are we only living our life for pleasures and sufferings and not for happiness?

Never Get Identified With Any Step In Life Move Ahead Moment By Moment

Commuting Problems

Many people commute long distances to work. Some people drive in rush-hour traffic daily. Others spend hours on a bus or train while still others travel to the minimum. Depending on our distance from work, the amount of traffic we encounter and our mode of **travel**, commuting may or may not be a major stressor.

Phobia

Many people have exaggerated fears of certain animals, places, objects, or situations which they imagine pose an immediate danger. These intense and recurrent fears are called phobias. The range of phobias is unlimited, and there are Greek names for almost anything a person can fear.

Some of the common ones and objects of unreasonable fear include claustrophobia (a terror of being shut in a closed place), acrophobia (heights), aqua-phobia (the sight of water), and in some children, school phobia. Social phobias can be specific fears of activities such as speaking in front of large groups or meeting new people.

One person was bitten by a dog at the age of six. For eighteen years, he was afraid of dogs, not just the dog that bit him but most dogs, chained or unchained! This is an example of a conditioned fear. Many of these people do not remember the connection or link that caused the phobia. In-fact his fear exaggerated and he had forgotten how it had started; but by carefully avoiding dogs, he had never learned to overcome his phobic anxiety. He fell in love with a woman whom he wanted to marry. But there was a problem. She not only loved him but also dogs. She wanted to raise a beautiful dog when they could afford a home with a yard.

This did not stop him from marrying the woman he loved because buying their own home seemed very far off in the future. As the days and years passed, he could feel the dogs through his wife's experiences. He could know the difference between a normal and mad dog. A normal dog will bite only out of his self defence. If you mean no harm to the dog, the dog has no reason to bite you. Over the period he was able to overcome his phobia. This is an example of how a stressor can become a source of pleasure and recreation.

Physical Work Load

Physical stressors are demands that change the state of our bodies. Physical stressors can be the strain we feel when we physically overextend ourselves, fail to get enough sleep or

nutritious diet, or suffer an injury. Pregnancies and menstrual discomforts are examples of physical stressors that are specific to women.

Physical stressors that people normally experience often involve increased physical demands. Working seventy to eighty hours each week without getting adequate rest can place a heavy physical demand on the body. We don't feel stress only during work as is commonly believed. An abrupt change from high pressured, sustained activity to the boredom of low activity can also be a stressor. For example, some heart attacks occur immediately after a busy period of time when a person finally retires from his hectic job.

Onset of Disease

Disease, be it short term or long term is an important stress factor. Many disease stress factors are short term and place us under immediate but time-limited stress. No doubt we remain uncomfortable for a short while but recover within a couple of days.

Let us concentrate here on some of the chronic diseases that last a life time particularly those that may have been inherited. Some people are born with a predisposition to develop chronic headaches, high blood pressure, arthritis, asthma, allergies, ulcers, diabetes, dermatitis, hyperthyroidism or multiple sclerosis etc.

Stress has its direct or indirect effect on practically each and every system of the body. The above mentioned conditions may or may not be visibly caused by stress. Nonetheless, they can be

aggravated by stress. With the onset of stress, every disease may increase in intensity. The attacks of the disease may last longer, and the frequency of the episodes may increase. Accordingly, with effective and timely management of stress, the recovery can be equally fast and acceptable.

It is an unchallenged theory that genetically each person has one or more weak systems within his or her body. For example, one or both of the parents of a young man may have diabetes. He should monitor his blood sugar more frequently than a person without a known family history of diabetes. Knowledge of our weak system could enable us to use our body as a barometer of stress.

Maintain Health By Knowing Your Weak System

Experiencing Pain

New and old injuries, accidents, or diseases give us aches and pains. Pains that cause people stress over a long period of time are particularly important. Old traumas to the joints, for example, can leave a person with a painful osteoarthritis. This condition, like a chronic disease, can flare up at times of stress.

A person with headaches may be plagued by chronic pain. In periods of stress, the pain may become more severe, last longer, and occur more frequently. The stress of any chronic pain may result in a reduction of both physical and social activities. Thus, the stress of chronic pain may lead to still more stress through isolation and inactivity. Ultimately, it may lead to depression.

Environmental Situations

Our surroundings that are often unavoidable, such as noisy typewriters, cramped offices, smoke-filled rooms, choking exhaust fumes and the burning heat of summer or the chilling cold of winter, are our environmental stress factors. Extreme environmental stimuli or condition, both excessive and scanty, almost always cause stress. Loud noise is stressful, but studies in special sound-insulated rooms have also demonstrated that total silence also can be highly stressful.

Activity

Purpose

To initiate the path of understanding on how to manage stress in your life.

What To Do

Identify ten stress factors in your life. Now plan how would you manage these one by one.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Purpose

To develop an understanding whether you really want to manage stress in your life or not.

What To Do

Make a list of ten situations where you are too much identified. Workout a plan on how to come out of those.

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for handwriting practice. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Purpose

To know your weak system for maintaining your health.

What To Do

Identify ten weak systems within yourself and plan to come out of those.

[illegible]

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr Rakesh Chopra is a visionary strategist focused to mentor ambitious leaders. He brings more than thirty years of experience in the fields of medicine, business management and spirituality to his work while mentoring ambitious leaders.

Why build up stress first and then manage it when it can be eradicated in the first place itself. This gives him an in-depth understanding of human nature (including relationship compatibility) combined with the ability to visualise innovative strategies that can be applied in your life and business to accelerate growth.

People at the senior / top management normally have the ability to manage most of the situations but are stuck in a few. Their friends don't have the understanding and the relevant wisdom on the subject and they can't discuss their problems or the visionary projects with their subordinates, so feel lonely at times. Dr Chopra very well fits in this role.