

Managing Stress

Judith A. Sedgeman, M.A., Executive Director, The Sydney Banks Institute for Innate Health
Sarah Quesen, Program Coordinator, The Sydney Banks Institute for Innate Health

Where does stress come from?

Have you ever wondered why, when you decide to shop for a decent used car, you notice cars and think a lot more about cars? Car buyers live in a world of cars. People who sew notice different fabrics more than people who don't. People who sew live in a world of fabric and textures. Roofers notice people's roofs more than the average person does. Roofers live in a world of roofs. A young woman who thinks her "clock is beginning to tick" sees a world filled with adorable little babies.

What about people who think that the world is a difficult place? That people are out to get them? That life is hard and filled with struggle? What kind of world do they live in?

Or what about people who just love others? Or those for whom life is a gift? They want to make the most of every day. For such people, the glass is always half-full. What kind of world do they live in?

Questions for reflection:

- What is the world really like?
- Who is right?
- In any case, what makes people's worlds so different?

How can stress go?

Think about breathing. Do you notice that when we begin to concern ourselves with our breathing; breathing becomes harder, almost a hassle? Usually we don't worry about our breathing, it's a constant fact. It regulates itself depending on what our body needs. Shallow breathing might suffice during a nap; heavy breathing might be needed after running up a flight of stairs. We don't have to make ourselves breathe harder; our body takes care of this for us. When we forget about it altogether, it is no big deal – just a fact of life.

In fact, we don't have to worry about our thinking, either. It too is a constant fact. If we leave our thinking alone, no matter what we're thinking, our thoughts will continually flow and change. Thoughts come and go and don't have to be a big deal. Even upsetting and stressful thoughts pass. It is the nature of thought to do so.



Questions for reflection:

- When are you more likely to remember something that is "on the tip of your tongue"?
 - A. When you are struggling to remember it.
 - B. When your mind is not on it at all (you are in the shower, driving, talking about something else).
- Why?

Key points

- Thinking is something we do, not something that happens to us.
- It's natural to calm down, and that's when we get our best ideas.

Principles

Three very simple principles explain the power of thought. The terms themselves are not important, but for now let's refer to them as Mind, Consciousness, and Thought. There's an energy always flowing through us. We can call this energy Mind. It doesn't have any form. Our heart is beating, our blood is circulating, our mind is thinking – these processes all use that life energy. Thought is our ability to continually use this energy to think about our life. Consciousness means we are aware of our life. In other words, Mind, Thought, and Consciousness work together and boil down to the simple idea that we are alive, we are always thinking, and we know it.

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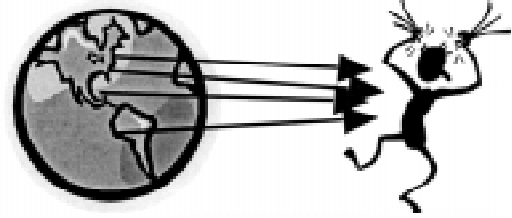
Principles *(continued)*

These principles cannot be figured out in the way that a complicated problem or a detailed map can be studied and figured out. In fact, trying to figure them out is not at all helpful in understanding them. The best way to see how our thinking creates our experience is to relax and not think too much about it. Not thinking about thinking is easier than it sounds, and it usually brings about a relaxing, calming feeling. The quieter our minds are, the more we can understand the true nature of the principles and experience helpful discoveries that make them applicable to our own lives.

Stress doesn't feel good. It's tiring and time-consuming, and it takes our energy away from enjoying life. Often people seek ways to relieve stress – some healthy, some not. For example, people exercise to relieve stress. Or people may drink alcohol to relieve stress. Either way, people often feel the need to DO something to get rid of their stress. But what if there was an easier way? The principles of Mind, Thought, and Consciousness imply that thinking is a constant, energized process. Our thinking is designed to move and be responsive to the moment. Too much thinking, especially too much thinking about ourselves, can work against the natural way thought flows. But if we don't work against it, healthy thinking is always available. This concept is called innate health.

Have you ever noticed how young children get over things quickly, don't hold grudges, don't worry excessively, and simply enjoy having fun? Serious adults often become light-hearted and relaxed in the presence of kids, whose spirit is often described as contagious. Kids naturally have a healthy, responsive thought process. We were all kids once, and that thought process is still available to us.

Leaving your stressful thinking alone and having faith in the idea of innate health, coupled with a simple understanding of the principles of Mind, Thought, and Consciousness, provide the know-how to rid yourself of chronic stress. The rest is up to you. Is being upset going to help solve problems? Is worry worth it? What are you willing to trade for your peace of mind?



Sometimes it looks like all of the stuff out there in the world makes us stressed. People will say "If it wasn't for this problem and that problem, I wouldn't be stressed."



*If you **think** about it, what's on our mind about the world is the only way we feel stress. That's why some people are stressed over every little thing that happens and others are rarely stressed even if they have what anyone might call a "good reason" to feel stressed.*

Recommended Reading

Banks, S. (1983) *Second Chance*. Tampa, FL. Duvall Bibb Publishing Co.

Banks, S. (1998) *The Missing Link*. Vancouver, Canada. Lone Pine Publishing