

STRESS

DYING FOR NO CAUSE



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**This e-book does not have an index because it is best read
in entirety. Sorry to be bossy!**

STRESS - DYING FOR NO CAUSE

FOREWORD

Stress is a word. Like Pudding. Or Aardvark. What it means to you is very personal. What you see, hear, feel, think when you are stressed is different to anyone else.

You may become excited, depressed, irritable, incompetent, listless, angry or suicidal but your perception of stress is yours alone.

So the word stress is only a word to catch flies with; the millions of different flies which buzz around your mind and tell you you are uncomfortable in some undefined way.

You may think you *have* defined where the discomfort is coming from and you may be right. Or wrong. The purpose of this course in stress squashing is to allow you to *know* where the stress is coming from and eliminate as much as you need to from your life.

It will be hard work.

There is no easy way to remove the causes of stress because often you cannot remove them, they are part of your existence and unless you decide to move to a Tibetan monastery for the rest of your life then you will have to live with them. *But only the necessary ones*. The ones necessary for maintaining your life in the style to which you have become accustomed. The others - the redundant ones which have built up over the years like so much bat guano will have to go.

You can dispose of them.

You can become great friends with the necessary ones.

If you follow the instructions in this booklet and use the alphasdynamics Stress Survival Kit CD's in the way in which they are intended by the end of this course you will be less stressed, more relaxed and you will have the tools to continue in that mode for the rest of your life.

Guaranteed.

And if not I will eat my hat even though I do not actually possess one. But if I had one in the right flavour and possibly made of chocolate, I would. Please, no hats in the post.

You are starting on a journey and I am happy to be your guide because it will be an exciting journey full of discovery and at the end of it I want you to be a better person. To yourself. To others. You deserve to be.

**WHEN PEOPLE WILL NOT WEED THEIR OWN MINDS
THEY ARE APT TO BE OVERRUN WITH NETTLES.**

Horace Walpole (1717-1797) Writer

WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED **STRESS**?

Stress is what you want it to be. It can be the heart pounding excited stress of a first encounter with a new love, the fight or flight stress of unexpected encounters with fear, or it can be the dead hand stress of bereavement, loss, humiliation, guilt (whether deserved or not), lack of achievement, performance expectations by yourself and others and a host of other, smaller life events.

Stress is natural, useful, constructive, destructive and impossible to avoid since you are presumably human. For non-humans reading this, stop right now since the rest of this section won't apply to you.

Stress is a chemical effect produced by a process over which you currently have limited control. When you experience anything at all through your senses, organs in your brain take those messages and respond to them by modifying your body to be able to cope with a changed situation. For instance, if you are attacked by a mugger (or a sabre toothed tiger), your eyes see the mugger, you hear the mugger's approach, you might even smell him or her and if physically attacked you will feel the sensation of being roughly handled. All these sensory inputs to your brain demand a response so that you can run away, or down your attacker with one blow. (And then possibly run away!)

The aim of your brain is to enable you to survive and it will choose the best way to help you to do that with as little damage to your body as possible. In the case of an attack the brain will send a message to your adrenal glands to produce two chemical stress hormones, adrenaline and noradrenaline.

Adrenaline will make your heart rate increase ensuring you breathe faster and take in more oxygen. Noradrenaline will route your blood away from currently unimportant areas like your skin and abdomen and send it to your muscles to give more power. Now your brain and body have given you the ability to either run away fast or use the power of your muscles to defend yourself. Clever or what? (But then again a gerbil works in much the same way).

When you are unable to make a decision about fighting or running away you may freeze, caught in a flip-flop of indecision. The adrenalin and noradrenalin are still rushing madly around your body but there is nothing for them to do since you are not running and not fighting. The only thing they can do is make you tremble, make you vomit, make you panic or make you pass out.

This is the brain's ultimate attempt at ensuring your survival. It figures that on the balance of probabilities if you are unconscious then the mugger will take your money and leave without inflicting harm on your body. Since you haven't run away or beat off the attacker there is little else it *can* do except curl up in a ball and hope for the best.

Sometimes this strategy works and sometimes it doesn't, but your brain has to go for the only option remaining. The strategy will work when the mugger is interested only in your money but not when the mugger is a sabre-tooth since it is uninterested in your money and more interested in your taste.

Coming forward several million years we notice that the human brain has not changed very much. It has invented the Wheel and subsequent pollution and traffic gridlock. It has made enormous advances in medicine, housing, transport, and the longevity of the human body. It has replaced fighting sabre-toothed tigers with fighting traffic, bosses, partners, siblings, progeny, colleagues, next door neighbours, perceived injustice, anything I've missed, and the State. It has also given most of us a social awareness and sense of responsibility which usually prevents us from doing anything physical during these confrontations.

But the chemicals are still there.

The mechanism for producing the chemicals is still there.

And it works *really* well.

And that is why you experience stress. You are responding to threat on a subconscious level, that is without conscious control, to a perceived danger which demands action of some sort. But you don't respond with action because you are conditioned to *not* to stab your boss with the letter opener until he stops moving and therefore being threatening.

It's called being civilised, and it's why we all have anything remotely resembling a happy life in our tribal societies.

But...

It can make you ill and enormously unhappy.

So there's the rub. You need 'fight or flight' responses to jump out of the way of an oncoming truck or save the life of your loved ones but you don't need them to cause stress, illness and unhappiness. The trick is to know when to have them and when you don't need them.

Consciously you know without a shadow of a doubt that you don't need them in most normal situations: at work in the office, at college, at a party or on a fast road but your subconscious mind insists on producing the same response whether the threat is World War 3 or being passed by a man with a better car than you who is obviously speeding otherwise how could he pass you since you are doing precisely the speed limit and anyway who the heck does he think he is just because he's got a flash car that's way too new and probably has lots of money and a good job not like yours which barely pays the mortgage and which has been driving you insane with boredom for years and years and particularly since they appointed that idiot Briggs who doesn't know his posterior from his elbow and who can probably afford a car just like that one.....

So, bang goes the adrenaline. Wallop goes the noradrenaline. All dressed up and nowhere to go. Your mind fumes without any action. Your muscles wait for action that never comes. The chemicals course through your blood looking for something to damage and usually find an organ here or there to punish for the lack of interest by your muscles. Your heart is a good one to go for.

What you need right now is the ability to *relax*. To focus on something other than the man in the car. But in the grip of these powerful chemical hormones you have very little chance of relaxation until the chemicals lose their potency and everything gets back to normal.

What can be done?

Well, some people have a stiff drink when they get home, others turn to drugs and yet others take out their frustration on those near and dear to them.

Not ideal. Not even desirable.

It would be really nice if you could switch off the world sometimes, just when it was getting annoying, wouldn't it? Then switch it back on when you felt better.

Dream on.

The world turns, people are born, live, die, events happen randomly and all without any control from you or I. It's a bit galling to realise that an individual's importance in the Grand Scheme of Things is about as much as that of an ant, but it's true.

Aha, you might say (if you have a penchant for theatrical outbursts), Aha! What about The Emperor Nero, Genghis Khan, Adolf Hitler and other such mentally challenged individuals, they had an effect. I agree 100%. But go forward ten thousand years into the future of humanity and see if anybody remembers them. If there's anybody to remember anything.

The Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (121-180 AD) had a pretty good handle on it when he said:

"All things pass: both that which remembers and that which is remembered".

Marcus Aurelius was a Stoic, so he tends to be a bit dour, but the essence is true. He knew that we are ephemeral and that events are ephemeral too. Of course they don't seem ephemeral at the time.

So, if we have no control over other people or random events what does that leave?

You are ahead of me. You are right.

Ourselves. You. Me. Us.

We can *control* how we respond to people and events. How can we do that?

Imagine an open stable door. Inside there is a distinct absence of a horse. It has galloped off since you didn't close the door and is probably working as a waitress in a cocktail bar at this moment. You close the door. That is what happens when you try to deal with people and events *after* they have affected you.

So, what do we need to do?

Make sure the door is closed *before* the horse leaves.

How?

By getting out the toolbox and putting a really good padlock on it. This padlock has a key and *you* have access to it, and *you* alone. If you decide to let the horse out for a canter then you can. If you decide that the horse has had too much exercise then you lock the padlock. What can never happen is for someone else to unlock the padlock and release *your* horse without *your* knowledge. They are short of a key.

OK. Less of all the ironmongery and equine references. What's the bottom line?

1. STRESS IS CONTROLLABLE WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS

2. NOT ALL STRESS IS BAD

3. YOUR RESPONSE TO PEOPLE AND EVENTS IS UP TO YOU.

ERRORS, LIKE STRAWS UPON THE SURFACE FLOW;
HE WHO WOULD SEARCH FOR PEARLS MUST DIVE BELOW.

John Dryden(1631-1700) Poet & Dramatist - All for Love Prologue

THE IMPORTANCE OF RELAXATION

Ever been relaxed? It's that floppy, happy, satisfied, calm mental state when all the troubles in your life seem to be soluble. Your breathing is regular, your palms are dry, your heartbeat is just ticking over, your muscles are un-tensed and even if its raining the sky is blue and the birds are twittering. And all without the aid of artificial stimulants?

If you answered YES, then you can have it back. When you like. As many times as you like.

If you answered NO, then you have a big treat coming.

If you answered 'Only when I'm unconscious' then you are being facetious and I'm starting to like you.

When you genuinely relax mentally things happen in your body. In just the same way that chemical hormones give you 'fight or flight' other chemical hormones can give you contentment. This is not the contentment of a cow in a field. It is the contentment of a fully functioning human being in full control of all senses and all faculties.

As you relax, external events and the actions of people remain important but not personal, not a direct attack upon you, your map of the world, your tribe, goods or chattels. Small events remain small events, not the onset of hostilities by alien forces intent upon your total annihilation. Large events become smaller, not a reason for going to the woods and stocking up on canned sardines. Horrible people - and we all know who they are - shrink to the insignificance they deserve and become cartoons, rushing round trying to cause havoc like little robots, unable to do anything of worth because they are so unhappy. As you learn to relax you can watch their antics with amusement, and if you feel the need you can try to make them happier, or you can just ignore them.

Because the main thing that having the ability to relax gives you is CHOICE.

When you *can* relax totally you are in a huge pool of calmness from which you can survey the rest of Life with some measure of detachment. Sit on your lily pad for a moment and imagine how that might feel. You can see things for what they *are*, not for how they might make you *feel*. And not for how you used to think they are. You can **choose** to be annoyed, happy, angry, involved, dismissive, indifferent. You can **choose** to take action or not to take action.

On the other side of the coin in the uncontrolled chemical inferno you know as stress; events happen and you are tossed about in the raging pool without any knowledge of why you are clinging to the inadequate lily pad, why the water is so rough and why you have suddenly dived off into the waves. No choice. And no idea why you don't have a choice as you breathe in water excreted by others.

So, relaxing is obviously a very good thing because it gives you choice. Puts *you* in control, and not a few wayward hormones.

How to do it? Easy. Just relax and...but hang on one cotton pickin' minute.. (I have no idea why I used that expression) ..if you *could* relax, you *would* relax wouldn't you? It's a little like saying just buy that new car when the credit card is cowering in a corner of your wallet saying, "Please, no more" and you have only one good shirt.

Remember how, when you were a small child you came to realise that grabbing a nettle was not a good thing? Or that if you tormented next-doors cat a bit too much it would try to rip bits out of you? Or even that when you did something Mummy and Daddy liked they would become terribly, terribly pleased and you would feel the warm glow of something, you had no idea what it was but it was preferable to when they were not pleased with you?

It was easy to learn those lessons. Unless you had a perverse desire to be repeatedly stung, torn to pieces in stages, or incur the painful wrath of the big people on a regular basis. You learned it because it was a survival strategy. Just like 'fight or flight', except that this was *behaviour*, not an automatic response.

As you grew and became older you learned lots more ways to behave in order to survive. "Don't get caught" is one. "Don't get caught kissing the girlfriend of the biggest boy in school, don't get caught stealing your older sister's makeup (etc, etc). You can take both of those examples from any gender specific standpoint you wish.

You became a behaviour factory. Churning out behaviours without thinking about it on a 24 hour 7 week 365 days per year basis. But unless you were very lucky you didn't learn how to fully relax. Because relaxing is just a behaviour. It is a learned response producing an automatic reaction to any given situation, and you choose when and what to apply it to.

How important is that compared to not getting caught?

Very.

If you can evoke a relax behaviour in any situation you can control your bodily responses in any situation. If you can control your bodily responses in any situation you have control, Captain. The starship You is fully crewed and ready to boldly go...just about anywhere.

So if you didn't learn it, how to go about it?

Your brain needs to know how.

But that's not strictly true. Your brain already knows how to relax. But not *consciously*.

THERE IS A ROAD FROM THE EYE TO THE HEART THAT
DOES NOT GO THROUGH THE INTELLECT.

GK Chesterton(1874-1936) Writer 'The Defendant'

THE ALPHA STATE

Your brain is divided up into two areas of awareness: conscious and subconscious. Or unconscious if you prefer Freud. I prefer 'sub' because it means 'under' and that is how I perceive this area of awareness.

If you were to examine a photograph of your brain you couldn't see where they are because they don't appear to exist as separate physical entities, but they do *behave* as if they were.

Your conscious mind is responsible for all the day to day activity we call thinking, what you are aware of as read this. It does all the calculations to enable you to at least appear as if you are a fully functioning human being. It is the seat of logic and reason. You are aware of it all the time.

Your subconscious mind is responsible for your autonomic nervous system, the facility by which your lungs expand, your heart beats, your organs function without any conscious thinking taking place. It is the place where all your memories are stored. It is the seat of all your emotions. You are very rarely aware of it. Until you do something you really didn't consciously think you would, like racing at 140mph on the motorway/freeway or something equally stupid.

Do you remember when you were at school?

Close your eyes now and imagine a warm summer's day, a classroom with sunlight slanting across the desks, and yourself listening to the teacher droning on about William The Conqueror, Hannibal or George Washington. Unless you were very keen on history, or the teacher was a spell-binding, enthralling communicator your mind begins to drift. It could go anywhere: forwards to a summer holiday, back to an important or pleasurable event in your life or perhaps nowhere at all, just drifting, drifting like a sailboat on a calm lake....

You are in the Alpha state. Your brain is cycling (no puns please) at about 12 cycles per second, and the conscious part of your mind is taking a rest as thoughts and emotions trickle out of your subconscious memory bank.

A piece of classroom furniture expertly aimed whizzes past your right ear and you are back in the classroom with an annoyed history teacher glaring down at you and asking silly and incomprehensible questions about William the Conqueror, Hannibal or George Washington.

You are now in Beta state. Your brain is cycling between 14 - 100 cycles per second depending upon whether the furniture hit you or missed you. This is the state you will spend a lot of your life in; I call it being 'awake'. Your conscious mind is fully aware of everything around you and is making rapid calculations about where the next piece of furniture is coming from, who the heck Hannibal is - apart from a serial killer - how close the history teacher is, whether he is a danger to survival, how you can avoid him, who is laughing at you, how sorry they are going to be at break, how hot you feel and a million other thoughts about your current situation and how to come out of it dignity and life intact.

If you had been daydreaming in the valley where the the sabre-tooth lives and he had disturbed you by seeing you as a hairy burger you would have snapped to this same state of Beta, pumped adrenaline into your bloodstream and you would have legged it as fast as you could. The high Beta state is not a desirable state to be in if you want to relax because it is designed for action.

The Alpha state is the one we are interested in The state where you are relaxed, the machinery of your conscious mind is a little distant and you feel warm and fuzzy. No stress hormones are zooming around your system wreaking havoc, no worries of any sort are present, just warmth, relaxation and a general feeling of wellbeing. Of course if you want to run the 100 metres in 9.5 seconds it may not be of much use, but wouldn't it be nice if you could *choose* either state as and when *you* wanted to?

More later.

HOW TOUGH IS IT IN WESTERN SOCIETY?

Physically it looks like a stroll in the park. You might think it's tough catching the subway every day and fighting with the crowds but it's not as tough as walking thirty miles every day for your water. Mostly you have food, water, shelter and all mod cons. So go to the gym, stop eating rubbish and drinking alcohol excessively because basically you have it easy.

However.

There are several way in which it *is* physically tough. Like pollution. If you live or work in a city on a daily basis you are ingesting complex hydrocarbons regularly, and nobody knows long term what the effect will be. If that wasn't enough even when you arrive back home more chemicals assail you from your furniture, electrical goods, garden and household sprays, foods, drinks, clothing and medication. Noise pollution adds to your stress. Cars, planes, mowers, washing machines, hi-fi, people all make noise and it all goes in your ears and thereby to your brain. Your brain has filtering devices but it has to go in to be filtered.

So physically it's not all roses, but mentally it's a **nightmare**.

Pressure is the word. It comes from all angles. Expectations, desires, needs, duties, all demanding fulfillment. Yours, his, hers, theirs. Pressure from the sheer mass of humanity which surrounds you.

And most of it is in your head.

It's not real. It's a phantom. A will-o-the wisp.

Other bits are real. You need to eat, sleep, drink, make love, find shelter and be spiritually fulfilled. Spirituality? That wee small corner of your mind which contains you, the real you, not the you you show the world, the you that changes as the scene and people change, but the quiet, still you who observes all that occurs. If that is about God for you, then fine, if it isn't then equally fine.

Whatever it means to you, it is a neglected part in the chaos we call civilization. It is a part you would like to contact again, because it brings balance and peace.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU *REALLY* RELAX?

Your body slows down. Your mind slows down. You become calm, centred and free from distress. Pleasure endorphins trickle into your bloodstream and you are at one with the Universe.

That's it really.

Is this good for you?

Oh yes.

Do you want it?

If no, goodbye and my apologies for wasting your time. Please form an orderly queue of one at the exit marked, "are you serious?".

If yes, read on.

WHAT IS *WRONG* WITH YOU?

Nothing.

I repeat: THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH YOU. I apologise for shouting.

I'll say something else: You are not broken.

YOU ARE NOT BROKEN

You are doing what you can to survive, in the best way you know how. The fact that it may not be the best way for you is what we have to address.

The following fun test will tell you what you are doing now if you fill it in honestly without peeking at the results. It will point the way to what you have to do to change your current way of doing things. Don't try to second guess the 'ideal' scores because all you will do is fool yourself and that *is* what you are trying to stop doing, isn't it?.

THE STRESS TEST

This is a simple test, and like all simple tests can only give an indication of whether you are unduly stressed or not. Answer the questions honestly (oh yes you will!) and you will have that indication, and can decide whether you need to do something, or do nothing.

Remember, all tests of this nature are just for fun, but can give you an indication of whether something is wrong in your life and point you in the direction you should go to eliminate or reduce excessive stress. There are 50 questions on the next few pages, in no particular order.

SCORING

| | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Never | -score -1(minus 1) |
| Rarely | -score 0 |
| Occasionally | -score 1 |
| Frequently | -score 2 |
| Always | -score 3. |

Questions

1. If I'm doing something important I miss meals.
2. The day seems too short for all the things I have to do.
3. The day seems too long and boring.
4. I have difficulty sleeping.
5. In the morning I don't want to go to work.
6. Events happen too fast for me and I can't cope.
7. Events happen too slowly and I get impatient.
8. When I'm relaxing I think about work or problems in my life.
9. When I'm relaxing I feel that I should be doing something constructive.
10. People seem to take advantage of me.
11. I find myself finishing other peoples sentences for them.
12. I rush around like a headless chicken.
13. In the car I feel that people are getting in my way.
14. I feel that something is missing from my life but have no idea what.
15. I find it easy to lose my temper.
16. I find it easy to become depressed over practically any setback.
17. I seem to have lost any physical fitness I once had.
18. I get aches and pains in the neck, back or shoulders.

19. I drink too much alcohol.
20. I get confused easily.
21. I feel that my work is who I am.
22. I find it hard to make decisions.
23. I bite my nails.
24. My stomach and digestion seem to be upset.
25. I have difficulty making and keeping friends.
26. I have difficulty understanding other people.
27. I find it hard to concentrate.
28. I worry about the future.
29. I feel dissatisfied with where I am in life.
30. I get angry much more than I used to.
31. I find myself breathing very fast.
32. I feel as if I could physically assault someone.
33. I feel unhappy even when things are ok in my life.
34. I avoid people as much as possible.
35. I get blinding headaches for no apparent reason.
36. My muscles feel tight and tense.
37. I have some sexual problems I never used to have.
38. I get coughs, colds or other minor infections.
39. I have dreams I know will never come true.

40. When I wake up from sleep I still feel tired.
41. I am secretive.
42. I put things off until the last possible moment.
43. I think the world has gone crazy.
44. I believe I am right.
45. I dislike a great many things.
46. I gobble my food.
47. I don't enjoy my food.
48. My memory doesn't work well nowadays.
49. I need to be in control.
50. I get hot or cold sweats out of the blue.

There. Wasn't too painful was it? You may have learned something new just by answering the questions. Now, add up your score and check it against the next page.

SCORE

Below 20 - How long have you had this problem with telling the truth?

Below 40 - You are supercool but perhaps should try to introduce some interest and excitement into your life. Get a hobby that you are passionate about!

40 -50 You are as cool as a cucumber and should serve as a role model for those around you.

51 -70 There are some issues you should address in your life but you have normal stress levels and cope well with mild extra stress.

71 - 90 Your stress levels are slightly elevated. You can choose to address them now or leave them to get worse. You will find that the alphasystems Stress Survival Kit will help you to identify the responsible stressors and remove them from your life.

91-110 Your stress levels are elevated beyond normal. You should attempt to modify or alter the way you deal with stress or your health may suffer. You will find that components of the alphasystems Stress Survival Kit will help you to begin and maintain that modification.

111-130 You are excessively stressed. You need to take action now to modify or alter the way you cope with stress perhaps using the methods described in this e-book or using the alphasystems Stress Survival Kit. You may of course already know what your individual stressors are and therefore know the solution to your stress.

130+ You are super stressed and possibly heading for disaster. If you have symptoms such as palpitations, shortness of breath, panic attacks, fainting, excessive sweating, IBS, food intolerance or any known medical condition you should see a medical practitioner to eliminate the possibility of physical ailments or conditions. If these tests prove to be negative you could use the alphasystems Stress Survival Kit or an equivalent method to help reduce your stress to acceptable levels.

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL...

So, if you answered the questions honestly you can now see a life-sized replica of yourself there on the page. It might not be the one you thought would be there. Try transferring that image or feeling onto a TV in your mind and examine who that person is. Close your eyes, switch on and take a few moments to do it. If there isn't a picture, sound or feeling plug the aerial and the power in at the back.

Go on, do it now, not when you've read the next paragraph.

It may not be a pretty picture, it may be a wonderful panorama of absolute splendiferousness. It may give you a feeling of warmth and pride or a feeling of total despair. You may hear the fanfare of trumpets or a dirge of broken clocks. Whatever you feel that is your first reaction to who you are and it's usually a pretty accurate picture of *who you think you are*.

Take another moment and again imagine yourself in your normal daily occupation whatever that might be. Do the same exercise and imagine how *other* people get an impression of you.

Do you want to change any of these pictures, feelings or sounds?

If you are stressed then the answer must be 'yes'. If the answer is 'no' then you are balanced and stress free so why did you buy this course? If you didn't buy it then you are either curious, or just like free stuff, both of which are ok. But you really ought to buy it because it's good and it will help you to take control of your life. Of course you may have stolen it, in which case you will probably need it in your cell, so enjoy.

What next?

You are going to change you. The way you are now to the way you want to be. The way others perceive you now to the way you want them to perceive you.

Right here. Right *now*.

THE BASICS

Breathing

We all do it and we do it mostly wrongly. If you've done a little meditation then you will have learned about the concept of Prana, which is about breathing properly, and you can skip the rest of this page.

For those who are still pretending to breathe, read on.

Just pause for a moment and examine your breathing, don't change it, just observe it. Feel it going in and coming out. Hear the *sound* it makes in your throat, nose, mouth and lungs.

My guess is that you will have been breathing in and out without noticing it until now.

How *could* you? Without breath you would die, so it's quite important. Your breathing is controlled by your autonomic nervous system which in turn is controlled by your subconscious mind so you can only exert conscious control over it when you think about it. For the rest of the time it carries on in the same patterns it has done for most of your life. It is a truly marvellous system but sometimes it has been programmed incorrectly.

My bet is that unless you have altered the way you were breathing to something you think is the way you should breathe you will have been breathing only in the top of your lungs. Short, shallow and unnoticed. This means that unless you are forced to run or perform a strenuous exercise the lower half of your lungs rarely get inflated.

As you sit there cast your eyes down to your abdomen. Is it moving up and down as you breathe? Or is your chest moving alone?

Try the breathing exercise on the next page.

BREATHING EXERCISE

Do this exercise every morning, every lunchtime and every evening at the very least. Do it more if you can. If you feel dizzy, stop doing it.

- 1. Find a comfortable upright chair and sit down with a straight back.**
- 2. Uncross your legs and place both hands in your lap palms upwards.**
- 3. Close your eyes.**
- 4. Take one deep breath in slowly through your nose and hold it for a count of 7 seconds.**
- 5. Breathe out slowly through your mouth.**
- 6. Breathe in again slowly through your nose and as you do make your stomach rise.**
- 7. Breathe out through your mouth and as you do push your stomach in so that the air is expelled slowly from your lungs. Make it last.**
- 8. Continue this routine for 5 minutes. As you breathe in imagine or feel the air entering as a soft, golden light. As you breathe out imagine or feel the air leaving your body as a grey cloud.**

What will this exercise do for you?

The prime purpose of the exercise is to help your subconscious to relearn how to help you to breathe properly. You are taking control. Eventually, if you repeat the exercise for around 30-40 days your subconscious mind will replace the old, shallow breathing patterns with the new beneficial ones.

You will start to receive oxygen in parts you never thought you had! Your brain and all the other organs in your body will be really grateful. Your skin will benefit too.

A Word Of Caution - You have been breathing incorrectly for most of your life. Your subconscious mind will replace the old pattern with the new, but the old patterns are still there and unless you keep reminding your subconscious it may fall

back into the bad, old ways. It is wise therefore, to continue doing the exercise once a day as a gentle reminder.

SINGLE NOSTRIL BREATHING

There is a theory that if you breathe in through alternate nostrils the right and left sides of your brain become balanced. Now, I don't know if this is scientifically true or not. What I do know is that if you perform this exercise daily your breathing should improve dramatically and you will feel a whole lot better. (Because I do it).

- 1. Sit comfortably with your back straight.**
- 2. Take a deep breath in and exhale thoroughly through both nostrils, keeping your mouth closed. Breathe out slowly and steadily through your mouth.**
- 3. Put your right index finger over (not in!) your right nostril and breathe in through your left nostril slowly and evenly. Allow the air to enter your lungs naturally rather than making too much effort.**
- 4. When your lungs are fully inflated, hold your breath, remove your finger from your right nostril and with your left hand place your left index finger over your left nostril. Now breathe out slowly, evenly and steadily through your right nostril.**
- 5. Leaving your left index finger over your left nostril, breathe in through your right nostril deeply and steadily.**
- 6. When you have inhaled fully remove your left finger from your left nostril and place your right index finger over your right nostril and breathe out slowly, steadily and evenly through your left nostril.**

Repeat this exercise twice more, then rest for a minute with your eyes closed.

You should try to do this exercise once a day for a week, then, when you are comfortable with it, increase the number of times you do it from three rounds to six for a further two weeks. If at any time you feel uncomfortable then stop doing the exercise. Remember that each inhalation and each exhalation should not be forced but natural and smooth.

You can continue to practice this breathing exercise over as long a period of time as you wish. You will find that it has a cumulative effect, naturally calming your body, mind and emotions.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Don't groan. Think of all those lovely chemicals exercise chucks into your bloodstream. Chemicals which clean the walls of your arteries, dissolve cholesterol, encourage your blood to pump to places unseen by a nice red corpuscle for the last twenty years, cause your heart to act as a muscle and get stronger each time you use it.

I won't go on at length, but gentle exercise is good for you physically, mentally and spiritually in all sorts of ways too lengthy to go into here. If you don't believe that then don't do it. If you want to believe it, then try it for two weeks and you will see what I mean.

HYPNOSIS

You are under my spell.....

You are not.

An hypnotic trance is a totally natural state. In it you have full control of whether you stay in it or come out of it. Most people like to stay in it because it's so awfully nice. If someone suggests something with which you have a moral or ethical objection your mind will ignore it.

You are in control.

Of course we have all seen films in which some unscrupulous hypnotist causes a hapless victim to do something awful. We have also all seen films in which people fly, get shot without injury, and travel through space at light-speed. None of it is real, It is all there to make money. Imagine an evil hypnotist saying, "You will rob the bank today, but only if you really really want to, and I wouldn't like to influence you at all". And the Hypnotee : "Ok, don't think I'll bother today". Sure. Big box office success.

When you achieve a trance state you are doing something you have done practically every day of your life.

When you go to sleep at night and when you wake up in the morning you pass through various altered states of awareness without trying. You know that bit where you are not really asleep but not really awake either? When you are drowsy, relaxed and feel warm and fluffy? That is the Alpha state, and you reached it with no help from me. It's natural.

Unfortunately, you can't currently access that state at will without dropping off to sleep - we call that Delta - when your brain cycles at anywhere from 4 or less cycles per second. Delta is fine for unconsciousness. For what we will be doing unconsciousness is not an option.

When you enter an hypnotic state, your conscious mind is taking a back seat. It's still there but not as active in condemning every suggestion made to it. Your subconscious mind is in the driving seat.

Now, as we said earlier the subconscious mind is where all your memories and emotions are stored. Some of these memories with their attached emotions are no longer useful to your survival as a human being or working in your current best interests. Hypnotherapy aims to find these redundant emotions and modify them so that they will no longer result in unwanted behaviour. Like feeling overstressed. alphasound hypnotherapy CD's use the Alpha state to help you to remove unwanted behaviour.

SELF CONFIDENCE & SELF ESTEEM

Self-confidence is not the same as egotism. Egotism means believing that you are the best thing since sliced bread and self-confidence means believing you are unrelated to sliced bread but could make a great loaf or start a successful bakery if you really wanted to.

Self-confidence is a quiet thing. Empty vessels make the loudest noise. Full vessels have no need to make noise.

We all know the apparently supremely confident individual. Never stops talking, centre of attention, smiles a lot, does absolutely everything right, never fails at anything, and we all think how great it would be to be just like him or her. But stop for a moment and examine who this individual is.

Why does he or she never stop talking? What is it about them that means they never listen? Why is what they have to say so important that they have to talk constantly? Where does this desire to be the centre of attention all the time come from?

Smiling is a good thing; it releases jolly chemicals and creates smiles in others, but where is the smile coming from? Is a smile in the stretching of lips, or does it come from somewhere else? More importantly, *should* it come from somewhere else? Someone who does absolutely everything right and never fails at anything? There are fairies at the bottom of my garden and Elvis is hiding in my shed. Honest.

This absolute paragon of success will tell you they have never had failures. So how did they learn anything? If they didn't learn anything what can they tell you? Are they being selective with the truth? Mmm?

Self-confidence and arrogance are separated only by the width of a hair, but they are as wide apart as the Grand Canyon.

The arrogant have to impose their philosophy of life on others (you don't have to read this!), and the self-confident just get on with living fruitfully making sure that what they set out to achieve is achieved, quietly, effectively and satisfactorily. Do they have failures? Yes. Do those failures depress them? No. Why not? Because they know that non-achievement of any goal is not the end of the world. Nor is it the end of achievement.

And always

always

always

something useful is learned.

Fail at a goal...change the goal...fail at that..change that one too..until it is achieved. Then go back to the one before with all you have learned and try again. This time you will have success if you really want to have it. The only reason you failed the first time was because you either:

a) didn't know what it was you were trying to achieve.

b) didn't have enough knowledge to achieve it.

c) didn't really *want* to achieve it.

The root cause of 'failure' and consequently many types of stress is a, b & c, or any combination thereof.

Before setting out your goals it is wise to spend some time thinking.

1. What *is* this thing I am trying to be or do? What does it *mean* to me?
2. How suited am I to achieving my goal? Do I know enough about the goal? Do I know enough about how to achieve it?
3. Do I *really* want this? What will it mean if I get it? What will it mean if I don't get it?

By answering all these questions honestly you will come closer to success in your goal. Or discovering that the goal you thought you wanted is not the goal you actually want, are best fitted out to achieve or has most meaning in your life. By ignoring these essential questions you will almost certainly predispose your effort to failure.

And at the root of all these questions is the constant question: Am I good enough?

AM I GOOD ENOUGH?

This question is not about confidence, it is about self-esteem, but it is the bedrock upon which confidence is built.

Anyone who asks this question, apart from the terminally egotistical or those with sociopathic tendencies will have doubts. Even the person with high self-esteem will have doubts. They will not be as big or as destructive as the person with low self-esteem but they will be there. If you stand on a crumbling cliff and there is ten feet between you and the edge you can deal with it better than if you can see space below your toes and touch the seagulls.

So, where does self-esteem come from? Are we all born with it and depending upon our experiences it grows or is flattened? Probably. Not certainly. No-one really know about the effects of genetic predisposition or so called "cell-memory", so we are indeed left with nurture as opposed to nature.

Your mind intends its body to survive. In that way your mind survives too, and it likes to be a survivor. So it learns things to help it and your body survive. Some of those things are useful at the time, some are useful for life and some are mistakes. We are interested in those things that are either no longer useful or never were useful in the first place.

When that big ginger haired kid in the third grade hit you on the nose and you cried and the rest of the class laughed you felt angry, frightened, frustrated, humiliated.

These feelings are all *emotions*.

The act of hitting and the consequent emotions were stored in your brain as being related to each other. Your mind learned that ginger-haired kids were dangerous, that being hit hurt both physically and emotionally. Now if that act of violence were to remain in your conscious mind all the time then the rest of your life would be spent avoiding people with ginger hair like the plague. Or even to avoid *anyone* who was bigger than you.

What actually happens, as far as anyone can tell, is that the memory of the event is stored in a place in your brain not unlike Random Access Memory (RAM) on a computer, and as soon as a similar event looks as if it is going to happen the emotions you felt during the original incident are dredged up to warn you to avoid a second similar incident. You may not even consciously remember the original incident. But when your mind identifies a situation which may have some elements of the original then the emotions are turned on. All the feelings flood back and you feel the same way you felt in third grade.

If your mind were a computer you would be able to search back through the memory and delete or change unpleasant events or feelings. Problem is that once a memory goes in to RAM, Random Access Memory, it has a tendency to change into ROM, Read Only Memory, and cannot be either changed or deleted without destroying the hardware. Your mind won't willingly destroy itself, so it will leave the memory and emotions stored but without conscious access. This might account for the reason people who have suffered horrendous episodes in their lives cannot

remember the episodes. Unfortunately, the episodes are still there, just not directly accessible.

Now, (and sorry to be so long winded) throughout one person's life there will be thousands of incidents like the ginger-haired kid (apologies to you gorgeous flame-haired people as a group but I had to victimise someone). Each one will have an event followed by emotions and feelings. There will also be events that are happy and have feelings of love, happiness, courage, peace, achievement and lots of other nice things attached to them. Everything is stored. The Good, the Bad and the downright Banal.

So your self-esteem, the way you perceive yourself, and the way you react to everyday events is dependent upon these memories and their attached emotions.

IT IS PURE LUCK HOW MANY OF EITHER TYPE YOU HAVE.

Putting aside the genetic component which we cannot prove, there is no way that you are able, throughout your life to control the quality, number or frequency of events which leave you with event memories or event emotions.

Take a moment, put down this book, close your eyes and try to remember consciously one really great thing that happened to you during your life that made you feel really good.

Do it now.

After you have done that, try to remember one really bad thing that happened.

Do that now.

Notice how, as you remember each one, you feel differently? The events you remembered are old events. They are not happening now, right at this moment but they are capable of making you feel either bad or good *as if they were*. You may have seen pictures, felt feelings, gone through the events like a movie; there may have been tastes or smells associated with the events. It may have been very clear or just a jumble of confusion. But the events are still there. The emotions and feelings are still there.

And that's only two events!

There are zillions of them hiding inside your mind.

All the events of your life add up to how you feel about yourself, your relationship to others, your worth, and your place in the cosmos. Your self-esteem.

But earlier I lied.

I said that there was no way to change or delete these memories or emotions. I should have said there is no way *consciously* to change or delete these memories or emotions.

Most reputable therapists would not even attempt to delete memories because memories are part of an individual's personality, but most therapists would certainly try to delete, modify or change *the emotions attached to those memories*. It's what mental therapy is all about. Remove the emotion and the memory has no power to harm or dictate present behaviour. It's just a memory without any feelings attached.

And without feelings or emotions attached it's a memory which is powerless. Like remembering an old TV show that you could take or leave, or a long lost acquaintance with whom you hardly enjoyed two words.

There is, in my humble opinion, only one way to modify or change past memories or emotions. And it can't be done consciously.

Hypnotherapy, Guided Visualisation, Binaural Sound, Subliminal Messaging, Meditation, NLP, EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) and some modalities of Psychotherapy are all ways to access the subconscious mind to effect change. Drugs can be used but will distort the veracity of the experience and may inevitably lead to dependence and possible physical and mental damage. It would be foolish in the extreme to use drugs to access the subconscious when there are other and better methods of doing so without the dangers inherent in chemical substances.

So, how does all this relate to feeling stressed?

Deep within your subconscious mind are the reasons why you feel so bad. The reasons may be related to event memories. Change the emotional content of the event memories and you change the way you feel now.

If you can find the right reasons or causes for your current feeling of undue stress then you can change them and in doing so change the way you feel right now. Hey presto - no stress!

Easy or what?

Yes. If you can find the way in.

For instance, a good friend of mine, retired now, was a successful defence lawyer for many years. He earned an excellent salary, had a big house, three cars, one beautiful wife, four lovely children and two holiday homes. Oh, and five rescued dogs.

But he was a failure, he said.

I fell off my chair. After a small dose of single malt scotch he explained that when he was nine he had wanted to be a fire-fighter, rushing into burning houses and rescuing people and dogs (he was fond of dogs). At school he was clever and a teacher had dissuaded him from becoming a fire-fighter because he was too 'intelligent' to be an action hero. So he had decided on becoming a policeman, but turned out to be too intelligent for that, too.

So he had settled on becoming a defence lawyer because he reasoned it would be like rescuing people from the conflagrations of Life. He then became involved in Corporate Law because his lecturer at University said there was no money in criminal defence work. Then the wife, children, houses, cars and a sit-on lawnmower came along so the jaws of necessity closed tightly. Now at 44, with a great career behind him and much left in front of him, he felt stressed, he was hitting the bottle, felt that nobody liked him and he was a failure.

Well, it was certainly true that he had spectacularly failed to become either a fireman or a policeman. But he had been an excellent lawyer, father, husband and dog protector throughout his life. I told him so, and he said "Sure, but I never got to save people's lives". No matter how many times I told him that he was a success he would always come back to that.

So why couldn't he accept that he had lived a full and fruitful life? Logic would tell him to look at what he had done, the relationships he had successfully forged, the visible products of his material success.

Logic belongs to the conscious mind.
It has little to do with emotion.

It has little to do with dreams. Remember?

The ones that we all have when we are young about being an astronaut, a train driver, a nurse or a fireman. The ones we rehearse in our young minds over and over as we think how great it will be when we are old enough to be the object of our desire. The dreams that create an emotional link to a strong desire.

Get the picture? You are ahead of me.

Dreams create expectations. We dream about our desires and sometimes make them so real that strong emotions attach to them. When the dreams are not realised we feel disappointed, as if we have been promised a treat and then the treat has been snatched away. We may not even remember the dreams.

But *something* does.

Forever.

All together now...

The Subconscious Mind.

So, every time I said to my lawyer friend "You are a success", his conscious logical mind said; "Yes, I am", and his subconscious emotional mind said "I wanted to be a fireman". All the logical stuff flew out of the window lost in that ancient desire, that ancient emotion dredged up from childhood.

Result? An unhappy, totally successful man losing his disappointment in a bottle.

The thing was that if you asked him whether he wanted to be a fireman now, he would say, "No way. I'm not brave enough or fit enough. And anyway I wouldn't have met my wife, had the children I have, possess three cars, two holiday homes and enough money to sink the Titanic in if I'd become a fireman. I would have still had dogs, though".

But he was still unhappy. Now, I understand that many of you will be saying something along the lines of "This guy's not for real", and "I couldn't be unhappy if I had all that he has"...

But...

That's not the point.

Imagine how you would feel if you were in a lowly job, no prospects, no money, driving a beaten-up rust-bucket, with a partner who hated you and children who crossed the street to avoid you. And when you were a child you wanted to become a fireman.

The feeling would be the same.

The only difference would be the compensation. But the compensation of riches would have no effect on the basic feeling, because it is just that; a feeling, anchored in a child's dream with no logic attached to it. The tattered remains of which is unlikely to ever come true.

And we all have our dreams. Every person reading this can remember when they were a child and what hopes, ambitions and dreams coursed through their young minds, only to be lost in the hurly burly of existence and perceived reality. For a few, fortunate ones some dreams become reality. But never all of them.

The point I have laboured so long and hard to make and probably with undue repetition is that:

OLD INFORMATION IS NOT NECESSARILY USEFUL NOW.

Dreams that were born in childhood and can never be fulfilled are old information. Not only are they not useful but they can be harmful. They are "should haves": "I should have been a fireman", "I should have worked harder at school", "I should have married my childhood sweetheart". I'm sure you can think of many more "should haves". All of them are useless, all of them are harmful to your existence here and now. Old information hardened into a destructive mental battering ram.

And because this old information has never been updated the subconscious mind, which has no comprehension of time, keeps prodding away at you to go out and do what you said you were going to do when you were 9, or 19.

I could talk myself blue in the face to my Lawyer friend extolling his virtues, but his emotional information had never been updated and I would be talking to the wrong part of him anyway.

So, we did a little work. Together, we updated the information by talking to the part of his mind where the information was kept. Not the logical conscious mind, the emotional subconscious mind.

We cleared a few old childhood and teenage emotions, leaving the memories intact and encouraged his subconscious to count all the ways in which he had been a success.

He runs a boat hire business now in Southern Spain. His wife is with him and his children have all flown the nest, but keep in touch. He no longer drinks, apart from a drop of mandatory sangria with dinner. He still has the memory of his dream of becoming a fireman, but that is all it is, an old memory, like any other old memory. And he tells me he is happy.

HAPPINESS - WHAT'S THAT?

Now I don't know what "happy" is for him.

Or for you.

It depends where you start.

So I can only make assumptions about you.

I know what "happy" is for me. So I always start there and work my way up or down.

Happiness is about getting some perspective on who think you are, what you think you want and how you are setting about getting it.

Or it may be about how you have decided that getting 'it' is not where it's at. It could even be the feeling you get after several beers or a couple of Tequilas (transitory and with a price), or it might be a still, quiet moment as you gaze at the object of your love and realise how fortunate you are to have them, or if you are a little arrogant, how fortunate they are to have you. A sunset, a child's smile, a kind act, the curve of a neck or a brand new Ferrari can all bring happiness for a time.

At this point you may think, what has all this got to do with Stress?

STRESS IS THE ABSENCE OF HAPPINESS

Now, if that is so then unhappiness is the presence of Stress. From time to time we are all stressed, so from time to time we must be unhappy. If we were not unhappy some of the time then we wouldn't know what happiness was - no comparison between one state of feeling and the other. Think about how awful it would be to trudge through life without knowing either emotion. To live a life to which you can give meaning involves both emotions.

So it doesn't really matter what 'happy' is for any of us. The feeling of being happy is on a sliding scale from mildly satisfied to ecstatically joyful in those of us not on proscribed chemical substances.

I would not want to run a boat hire business in Spain. Long hours, ungrateful clients, damaged or stolen boats, expensive refits, expensive mooring fees and an unfamiliar language and culture would all stress me to the point where I would have to build the business just to be able to delegate. In doing so I would get stressed, over a long period of time because I would not be happy.

My ex-lawyer friend tells me he is happy. He has found his "happy point" and that is great for him. Mine is right here, right now, because it makes me happy to be able to help people banish some elements of Stress from their lives. When I stop doing this, I will do something else because it no longer gives me the feeling of happiness.

IF WHAT YOU ARE DOING ISN'T WORKING, DO SOMETHING ELSE.

That is an old saw from Neuro-Linguistic Programming and it is true up to a point.

You can change all the elements in your life and still never achieve an absence of Stress. New elements bring new and different stress. You can change one element in your life and achieve Happiness.

**IF WHAT YOU ARE DOING ISN'T WORKING, DO SOMETHING
BETTER.**

How would you know if it was better before you change to it?

You wouldn't.

It's a risk.

But life is not a practice session. Could be, if you believe in many lives, the transmigration of souls and the concept of Karma. But just to please me let's say that we have a duty to make ourselves and others as happy as we can during this particular life.

Why?

Because what would be the point of actually *being* alive otherwise? A life of misery? Who would *really* choose that? All you Nihilists and Anarchists can leave the room now. Or if you really want to be negative, stay. Then you can feel really bad about others realising they can feel happy.

IF WHAT YOU ARE DOING ISN'T WORKING, DO [SOMETHING!](#)

What exactly?

No idea. But what are you doing now? You are reading this e-book. If you are reading this e-book then you feel you have too much Stress in your life.

YOU ARE DOING [SOMETHING.](#)

You have started up that path towards reducing your Stress just by the simple act of reading the words of someone you don't know who is probably in a country foreign to you and who may be as mad as a bandicoot. (I should say at this juncture that I am not as mad as a bandicoot; that was years ago and I'm much worse now).

YOU [ARE](#) DOING SOMETHING.

I should say that once more with the emphasis on 'YOU' or 'DOING', but I will refrain.

Congratulations! You are seeking help for Stress. This is a good sign. Now I ought to come blazing in here and tell you that the only way to get *real* help is to buy an **alphadynamics Stress Survival Kit**, but that is just not true. For goodness sake,

I'm English and my tribe is not by nature pushy. The Stress Survival Kit is just one way, and a splendid way at that, but not the only way.

You may not have the money to buy the Kit. If that is so, then there are alternatives which are practically cost free.

YOGA is great. You have to stick at it, but it can bring enormous benefits in terms of physical and mental relaxation. It might cost a little initially to go to a class, but throughout the world there are government sponsored educational initiatives which keep the cost low.

MEDITATION is also brilliant. Like Yoga, it demands some application and time but if you meditate you can find many of the answers to your problems, and perhaps even some questions you have never thought of too. You can go to a Public Library and loan one of the excellent books on Meditation available today.

EXERCISE is very useful for reducing Stress. All those dangerous stress hormones and other crafty chemicals that are up to no good can be rendered practically harmless by a good 'burn'. Please remember to take medical advice before engaging in any form of exercise, and don't try to do it all in the first day.

EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) was invented by Gary Craig in the USA, and you can learn how to do it quite free of charge by downloading his excellent manual from his website: <http://www.emofree.com>.

It is helpful if you can actually see someone doing the procedures and you can do that by either buying his CD's or going along to a practitioner, which unfortunately costs a little. You will probably feel a tad foolish trying it for the first time, but there are many examples on the website of how effective it can be, when done properly. You have to make your own mind up if it is for you.

USING YOUR OWN RESOURCES

The most important free way of dealing with Stress is by changing your own perspective.

The alphasdynamics Stress Survival Kit was designed to help you to do that, but if you can see what you are doing from a different angle - not easy, I know - by enlisting the help of friends or family and getting their opinion on what it is you need to change, you may find a radically different insight into why you are doing what you are doing and what you need to do to stop doing what you are doing.

However...

It doesn't always work, because, no matter how much they love you, everyone has their own agenda, as you have yours. But somewhere in that mass of conflicting but well-meant opinion and lovingly biased advice you may find a kernel of truth. If you are big enough you can use that.

An example of self-help might be when you come down to the car heading for an important meeting or out on a first date and the car won't start. Now you could think that someone was doing it on purpose. You could kick the tyres. You could think, "Why me?", or you might spend the rest of the day fuming about automobiles and their desire to inflict mental harm on you by refusing to cooperate in the Master Plan.

Or, if you were looking to change you could take this minor setback as an opportunity and a challenge to get to that meeting or date by a means you had never thought of before. Use your ingenuity and intelligence and don't just leap on a bus or call a cab. Someone thought enough of you to give you brains; the least you can do is exercise them once in awhile. In that way you turn a potential mini-disaster into a minor triumph that you will carry forward into other areas of your life.

So when you awaken tomorrow morning and bad luck is sitting on the door step, take a deep breath, go back in the house and screw on another head. This will be the head that copes. The one that is totally unfazed by bad luck, laughs in the face of disaster and encourages Fate to circulate rapidly on your middle digit.

But if there's a policeman sitting on your doorstep, just cooperate.

FLIPPING YOUR WIG

This saying may have come from the tendency of elderly Barristers and Lawyers to become doo-lally as their careers tumble towards the zimmer.

It is sometimes called "burn-out". It can happen anytime that your mind and body are writing cheques that neither can cash with the other.

Burnout is the bedfellow of Success.

You achieve some success, you want more, you drive yourself beyond the limit of your resources and crash, bang, wallop what a picture, what a photograph there you are all washed up and nowhere to go, or there would be if you could remember where you are, or even who you are supposed to be. Burnout is the live-in-lover of what we loosely term Failure, too. You think you have failed, so you try harder and harder and harder, your inner resources creak then break and.... same result.

I said, "think you have failed" on purpose because all supposed failure is subjective, that is it is failure only by arbitrary standards which may not be your own. We all know the Boss, Partner or 'Friend' who will emphasize every apparent 'weakness' you possess, from your physical appearance, dress sense and intelligence to your choice of food, drink and the way your breath smells. Or those who will attempt to minimise every small success you may have and thus deter you from having any more.

1) THESE PEOPLE HAVE ISSUES OF THEIR OWN.

2) THEIR ISSUES ARE NOT *YOUR* ISSUES.

They are for the most part negative people and unless you have no genuine choice avoid them like the bubonic plague both for your own sake, and ultimately to force them to address their own issues without copping out by using you as a distraction mechanism so they can avoid the truth. Doing this is positive for both of you.

Always associate with positive people. The ones who see a bright side to every dark cloud, who recognize that the cloud is pretty dark, but there is blue sky behind it.

Not the happy-clappy type or the grinning loon, but those who are quietly positive and seem to be solid and measured in their perception of people, things and events. You will rarely find this type of person engaged in malicious gossip, one-upmanship or character assassination. You will usually find them simply getting on with their lives and enriching the lives of others as a by-product. People like that will raise your spirits and drive the engine of your creativity. The others will sap your confidence in an attempt to prove themselves superior, when deep down they know they are not.

BECOME THE ADULT (someone has to)

It is very easy to take the slippery slope to childish behaviour. After all, you were once a child so you know the script. But now you are an adult, it is time to put away the things of childhood. Pick all the toys up from outside the pen, place them back in the pen and put the pen in the attic. Take responsibility. You can do it. It doesn't hurt much.

A good way to de-stress is to watch other people who haven't yet shed childhood. They may be 18 or 80. Watch as they run through the scripts for getting their own way; all the scripts they learned as a child. Observe the lack of real passion or commitment in everything they do. My Grandma used to call it 'mardiness'. Again you have a choice with these mardy people. You can play the same game and see who can scream the loudest and who can hold their breath for longest, or you can treat them as the characters they are. If you choose the latter, as you should if you are serious about reducing Stress, then you will walk away from them. Would you choose to have a serious adult conversation about important things with a screaming child? Of course not.

EMULATE MOTHER THERESA

This does not mean go out and buy a nun's outfit. Unless..but let's not go there.

This woman was kind. She used her life to be kind. Try to be kind to someone every day, even when there is absolutely nothing in it for you. Be kind especially to those whom you love and respect. Be kind to perfect strangers.

Why?

Because there *is* something in it for you. You can't see it, touch it, smell it or use it

as collateral for a penthouse. But it is *real*. Every time you are kind to someone without hope of return another little tick goes against the credit account in your subconscious mind that is headed Self Esteem. Conversely, every time you are mean and underhanded another tick goes in another place. Being kind is gold. Go out and get it. Go out and deserve it.

BECOME A NERD

There is no need to wear thick glasses, spend all day in front of a computer and relish early Star Trek episodes, unless you want to. Personally I prefer the later ones anyway.

Being a nerd means being an *enthusiast*.

We all know super cool people who have no passions, enthusiasms or childlike energies. If they did they would not be super cool, because being super cool means being above all that, being world weary, having seen, felt and experienced all that life has to offer. It means sneering at those who enjoy *anything* and show it. It means cringing in a little cool box so that no one can enter unless they divest themselves of humanity. It means trying to stand out from the herd whilst hiding slap bang in the middle of it. It means pretending to be unsurprised. At anything.

It is the equivalent of being dead.

Do you want to be dead?

If you are still reading this you do not. You want to be alive. You want to be capable of experiencing life without the damaging, corrosive effects of unnecessary stress.

To be alive means to be enthusiastic. To see the world afresh each time you wake. To realise that you haven't seen it all, and that there is still surprise waiting for you.

Get a hobby.

I don't care if it is a hobby that other people find ridiculous. Collect old beer mats. Search for that rare beer mat from 1927 which was in the bar that Machine Gun Kelly had his first drink in. Or the beer mat Humphrey Bogart flicked at Ingrid Bergman to get her attention in "Casablanca". He didn't, but you get the picture.

What's the point? *There isn't one*. There doesn't have to be one. Because a hobby is

a way of giving your mind a rest from the constant battering of other people's expectations. It is all yours. Other people, apart from the strange individuals who share your passion will not be interested, but when the ragged calls to yet another of life's battles are heard you can go and do your hobby for a while, before deciding if the calls are actually for you or they've just got the wrong address. A hobby can save an awful lot of wasted effort and consequent stress.

Read the Desiderata.

It's on the Net. One random address is: www.fleurdelis.com/desiderata.htm Either Max Ehrmann wrote this in the 1920s, or it was found in a church in Baltimore, USA and dated 1692. It contains many truths; as true now as they were then. Someone even used it in a song in the 1960s.

And if, for you the Desiderata smacks of old-tyme homilies and truisms then consider that hobby.

You don't have time for a hobby?

Pull the other one.

If you are stressed you currently have time for many activities which are very nearly totally useless. There's all the time you take up feeling stressed for instance. Take a moment and review your day. You wake in the morning, you have breakfast, you may go to work or you may stay at home. Search out all those spaces in your activity and add them up. Then total up all the times you have engaged in fruitless activity without any end result. See what I mean?

Time is relative.

Einstein said it first but I think he missed the point.

Time is relative *to you as an individual*.

Often you will hear older people say things like "I don't know where all the time's gone", or, "There are not enough hours in the day". How many times do you hear children or young people expressing that sentiment?

For all those people who make statements like that:

NOTHING HAS CHANGED BUT YOU.

The Earth still circles around the sun once every day. There are still 24'ish of those hours in every day. Nothing has changed except your perception.

It follows that if you are the only factor which has changed then you have the facility to change to something else you prefer. If you change to something else you prefer then you will become a Time Lord, a Master of The Universe. You will be able to look back on each day and say "I know where all the time's gone because I decided where it should go". You will look on the world and it will be good. You will glance back at your achievements, however small, however large and feel pride that they are yours. You will think only of how best to create happiness in yourself and others because what would be the point of any other philosophy?

YOU CAN CHANGE ANY PART OF YOU.

YOU CAN CHANGE IT NOW.

Of course, alphasdynamics will help you to achieve change; that is what it is designed to do. But you have to want it. You have to need it like the oxygen you breathe.

WHEN YOU HAVE FAULTS, DO NOT FEAR TO ABANDON THEM.

Confucius (551-479BC) Philosopher- Analects

LET'S ROCK!

Go outside. Take a look around you. Everything changes. Absolutely everything. Pick up a pebble or a rock and look at it. Feel its texture, weight, size; examine its colour, sniff it. Even a rock changes. The changes are minute and imperceptible to the human eye, but elements of the rock are oxidising; other elements are being eroded by earth, wind and fire (good band), water, sand, or chemically altered by pollutants. By picking up the rock you are creating change as the complex chemical soup of the perspiration from your hand combines with the minerals of the rock. Each second you look at the rock it is changing.

The big difference between you and the rock is that you have choice.

You can choose *why* you change, *how* you change, *when* you change and *what you change into*. The rock has no such luxury. It is passively accepting changes which may or may not be beneficial to its existence as a rock. When a truck rolls over it the rock becomes powder, the powder scatters and the rock is no longer a rock but a whole load of tiny rocks no longer in cohesive harmony. That is maybe what it was ultimately destined to become, but it had no choice in when, how or where.

The decision you must make is whether you are a rock or an intelligent, beautiful human being.

Very few rocks buy the alphasdynamics Stress Survival Kit. In fact, unless I am much mistaken, to this date, none have. Rocks are non-sentient, passive and do not possess credit cards, which may explain this anomaly.

Of course, everyone who buys the Stress Survival Kit is an intelligent, beautiful human being. But then I would say that wouldn't I?

Now the decision about rock vs human being is silly. You know that you are a human being and that the dissimilarity between you and a rock is pretty overwhelming. That dissimilarity does not stop any of us from behaving like a rock, on occasion. There are rock-like aspects to my own nature which could do with changing, but not as many as there used to be.

As human beings we resist change; it is a part of our survival strategy to slide into unthinking routine because within that comfortable routine there is safety. Change part of the routine and who knows what might happen? The unknown. And within the unknown there is fear.

So, having decided you are not a rock but a human being you now have to decide whether you wish to live your life in fear.

If you say "Yes, I do", then I understand. Similarly, you should understand that a life lived in fear is not the best way to achieve emotional, physical or spiritual happiness. In fact, I would, quite boldly state that it is impossible to achieve any happiness if your life is one constant round of fearfulness. So, you choose to live in fear and as a result you may never achieve a measure of happiness. Mmm. Are you *really* sure you want to stay that way?

If you say, "No, I don't want to live in fear", then you don't have to. There will be fear occasionally of course: it is quite right to be fearful of dangerous things, things you should run away from as fast as your legs (now furnished with a good supply of oxygen if you did the breathing exercises) will carry you.

That is *reasonable* fear and quite unlike the *unreasoning* fear which constantly nags away in the back of the mind.

Right at the start I said this:

"Stress is what you want it to be. It can be the heart pounding excited stress of a first encounter with a new love, the fight or flight stress of unexpected encounters with fear, or it can be the dead hand stress of bereavement, loss, humiliation, guilt (whether deserved or not), lack of achievement, performance expectations by yourself and others and a host of other, smaller life events".

Knowing what you know now you can see that all of these events produce fear. Not always the same kind of fear, but fear nevertheless.

And I will show you something different from either...
Your shadow at morning striding behind you,
Or, your shadow at evening rising to meet you
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

T.S.Eliot (1888-1965) Poet and Dramatist - "*The Wasteland*"

And fear is at the very root of stress. Conquer unreasoning fear and you conquer unnecessary stress.

To conquer unreasoning fear you do not need to be in control of events which are happening totally outside your control.

You only need to be in control of *the way you perceive them*.

The alphasdynamics Stress Survival Kit will help you to make those changes to your perception which will give you that control, if you really want to.

OK. Commercial over. And so is this small tome.

We've come quite a long way on this journey. I hope that it has been useful for you. If it hasn't, then my apologies and I hope you find alternative ways of surviving unnecessary stress for your own sake, and for the sake of others around you.

There are lots of things I have left unsaid because I would like you to experiment with ways to customise your response to your stress, rather than just accepting a formulaic dictat from someone you have never met. Your stress is unique to you and you will find many and diverse ways to tailor your response to your unique combination of stressors. *If you really want to.*

For those readers who have found this short e-book useful I'm glad - in a sentimental and perhaps totally inappropriate way - that I might have helped and I hope that the information and exercises will enable you to find many moments of that emotion we term happiness and eliminate as much unnecessary stress from your lives as you choose. Enjoy the journey.

I wish you well.

<http://www.alphasdynamics.com>

IT IS ONE THING TO SHOW A MAN HE IS IN ERROR, AND
ANOTHER TO PUT HIM IN POSSESSION OF THE TRUTH.

John Locke(1632-1700) Philosopher
'An Essay Concerning Human Understanding' Bk4 Ch7

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