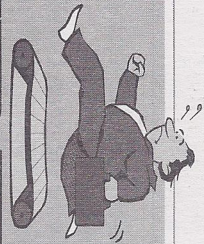


STRESS

◆ CONCERNING YOUR HEALTH ◆



CAUSES OF STRESS

Stress occurs in any situation which requires making a change. By definition, stress is a physical, chemical or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation.

Too much to do, bills to pay, hurry to work, hurry home, rush to the market, try to crowd in as many activities as possible in the 24 hours a day that we have. There is never enough time and never enough money to do all the things we need to do. We push ourselves the maximum and at the end of the week we are "burned out."

We all experience stress in everyday living in one form or another. Stress becomes distress when we perceive it as a destructive force. It is not just the crises of life that generate stress; all the demands of living are stressors. The way we relate to these stressors makes the difference!

Unfortunately, negative emotions like fear, anger, resentment, hatred, grief, jealousy—if sustained and unresolved can actually decrease the body's ability to resist disease. Would unresolved stress fall into this same category?

Stress can be viewed differently by each individual. What might be stressful for one person might be considered fun or challenging for another. Life-threatening situations are stressful for all but how we relate to the situation can make a big difference in our outlook on life.

When a person chooses to jump from a plane as a sky-diver, it is fun. If a person has to jump from a plane for survival, it is stressful! Thoughts and emotions directly influence the mind, which in turn powerfully affects the body.

THE HAPPY HORMONE

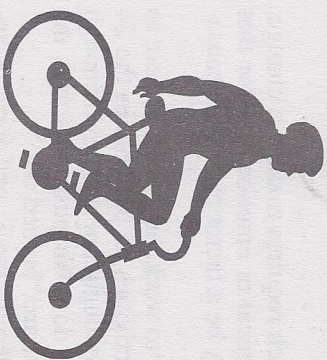
Did you know that your body can actually produce a "happy hormone"? Positive emotions such as joy, laughter, love, gratitude, and faith can produce endorphins



which promote healing, strengthen the immune system, and produce wonderful feelings of well-being.

There was a man named Norman Cousins who actually healed himself from a fatal disease by using these positive emotions, especially laughter along with a sensible lifestyle. He found that by laughing a lot and sharing this happiness with others, he not only helped himself to overcome a terrible disease but he assisted others to promote happiness and healing in their bodies.

Research has proven that a stable emotional life is as important to good health as diet, exercise and the avoidance of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.



Physical exercise has proven to be beneficial in producing these endorphins. Besides being helpful in promoting good physical health, the exercise produces a feeling of well being in the person who exercises. Give it a try. After several days of exercising regularly, you will feel a difference in your mental attitude, you will be more positive and you will have more self-confidence.

HOW TO DEAL WITH STRESSORS

What can a person do to cope with stressors and remain a positive, happy person? There are many situations that exist in our lives which we cannot change. How can we deal with these situations?

1) **AVOID**—avoid stressful situations when possible, such as moving away from a stressful environment or at least avoiding going to places that you know will be a tense situation.

2) **COPE**—one way to cope with stress is by keeping a healthy body: exercise, proper rest, good eating habits, and a positive attitude. There are situations that are legitimate threats. We know from experience that certain dangers exist and we feel anger or guilt because of past experiences. We are going to have some problems but God does not want us to live in fear or guilt. A man at peace with God and his fellow men cannot be made miserable. The heart in harmony with God is lifted above the annoyances and trials of this life.

A trust in God that produces an attitude of gratitude and a divine love for others, probably does more to control distress in our lives than all the coping techniques we can invent.

