

HOW TO CONTROL STRESS THE NATURAL WAY A 21 DAY PROGRAM

***By
Laurie Lacey***

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Introduction

I'm delighted to give you this report! Together we will explore a drug-free natural way to cope with and control the level of stress in your life.

It is a nature-based approach, with the potential to guide you to a more peaceful, balanced, and joyous life style.

So, have a cup of tea or a coffee, or even pour yourself a glass of wine, then find a comfortable seat and enjoy this report. Have a good time reading it. Relax! And, by the way, feel free to send me your comments.

<http://www.naturalhealingtalk.com/contact.htm>

The Stress of Speed

The world has changed greatly over the past ten years. Think about it! We've witnessed amazing changes, including the corporate and government led march towards globalization and free trade. This process is pushed along by high speed communication networks, and by an array of electronic gadgetry, un-heard of just a few short years ago.

Yes, the pressures of modern life, with its focus on speed and almost instantaneous communication, creates the perfect environment for a debilitating amount of stress in our lives.

On the other hand, this same technology is liberating in that it has practically eliminated national borders, and created a global village, allowing individuals or groups to exchange information twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Distance is often a minor player in our current world.

Fantastic! Yet, ironically, it leaves us stressed out, and working longer hours than ever before.

The Bitter Truth

Rather than promoting and giving us extra leisure and family time, this

technology has fostered an expectation and demand for greater productivity in the work place, regardless of time involved.

In the mad rush for profit and gain, for keeping ahead of the competition, former productivity levels are no longer acceptable. We are on a crazy, vicious spiral, which is partly the result of speed, of consumerism, of a failure to move beyond concepts and notions dating back to the industrial revolution, and partly the inability of human consciousness to fully grasp and appreciate the liberating potential of what it has created. To do so, requires a paradigm shift in our consciousness, and in our notions of what constitutes prosperity, success, and human unfoldment.¹

Yes, consciousness must adjust to the new reality. We seem often to be reacting and modifying our lives to suit new technology, rather than debating and determining how technology should be modified to give us greater freedom in our lives. This is an important distinction, and one that seems largely lost on us.

For the most part, children adjust very well to this technological spiral; but, to what extent is this adjustment at the expense of their health and wellness? To what extent are they being indoctrinated to repeat the mistakes of the past, and discouraged from re-shaping the world towards a new age of enlightenment?

Are we masked? Do our hi-tech abilities mask an underlying dis-ease? A dis-ease ranging from rampant attention deficit and hyperactivity problems, to a society addicted to psychiatric and other prescription drugs, techno-gadgets, and violent video games.

In other words, an understanding of technology, and the ability to rapidly learn its applications, and adjust to the lifestyle it promotes, is not necessarily synonymous to leading a healthy, balanced life, or being a contented, joyous person.

¹ By “unfoldment” I mean the refinement and advancement of a person’s intellectual, emotional, psychological, and spiritual abilities and sensitivities.

The Missing Factor

So, what is missing in the equation? What is the factor that can reconcile the reality of high tech life, with the consciousness necessary to foster a healthy understanding of the balance between technology, human dignity, contentment and freedom?

This factor is NATURE. A nature awareness based on a connection to the landscape. A sense of place, of roots, and of belonging. A feeling of connectedness to the land, and to the web of life. Nature is at least partly the answer to our grotesque stress levels, and to moving humanity forward on a balanced path.

This is accomplished by experiencing nature directly, and is enhanced through the practice of nature awareness exercises, such as those given in this report. Those exercises are useful for nurturing a relationship to the earth. This nurturing will bring a calm and joy that will aid in the control of stress and dis-ease in daily life. The Natural Healing Talk website is dedicated to promoting this nurturing relationship.

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PART II

The human body has a wonderful capacity to heal and regulate itself, if given the opportunity to do so. There are many factors which facilitate and maximize this natural potential.

For example, sleep allows the vital organs to rest and regenerate themselves. It promotes cell growth and improves mental functioning. Other factors include proper exercise, healthy food, adequate fluids (water alone, or supplemented with fruit and/or vegetable juices). As well, it is important to

breathe fresh air, and to practice deep breathing, periodically. For example, unless you have a health condition that prevents it, try taking several deep breaths in the morning, and, in the evening, prior to retiring for the night.

All of those things mentioned above, nourish, and promote a balanced state of body and mind. However, they may not be enough to combat the influence and effect of acute stress.

Now, before proceeding further in this discussion, I should make one thing clear: it is that we must not view stress only in negative terms. Stress is a natural occurrence to all life forms. It is part of life in the physical world. Even plants experience environmental stress. Without it we would become weak and frail, unable to care for ourselves. So, stress is healthy and necessary to our lives. But, when stress moves beyond our normal capacity to handle it, when it becomes acute, then it jeopardized our health. It is at this point that much worry, fear, panic, and other factors of dis-ease become prominent.

It is important to catch the problem before it reaches such a severe stage. Otherwise, if allowed to gain momentum, professional therapy and counseling could be necessary.

So, be pro-active, and take control of your life before stress and environmental circumstances rule the day. Indeed, in critical situations, consulting a doctor and/or counselor is a pro-active step! Don't be afraid to seek professional services, as this is a step forward.

Another pro-active step is to use this report, as it should enable you to better handle whatever circumstances arise. It is a tool for the realization of greater harmony in day to day life. The exercises should help to calm you to the point where your capacity for wellness can manifest more fully.

PART III

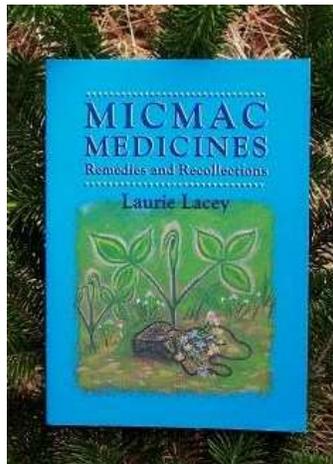
It is important to choose to focus on the present moment. To live in the present moment. This is incredibly powerful! To live in the present is to be open to the spontaneous flow of life!

On the other hand, to live with your consciousness placed somewhere in the past or the future, slowly depresses the quality of your life. Why? Well, because your mind and body are not totally together in the same space and reality. You are not totally present and focused as you walk through your day to day life.

Dwelling obsessively on the past will poison your life. This is especially so, if it is a negative experience like a relationship gone bad, or a painful work experience, or something similar that sticks in your consciousness. Dwelling in the past does not allow you to give 100% to your current actions and goals. If you are not functioning at your best, you open the door to stressful situations that might arise because of it.

On the other hand, dwelling obsessively on imaginary circumstances in an imaginary future state, will also distract you from the power and potential of the moment. My personal philosophy is to eye the future, but momentarily, to inspire my goals and aspirations.

If I hadn't assumed this perspective and philosophy, I probably wouldn't have completed and published my Maritime Canadian best seller, ***Micmac Medicines***.



In general, I believe that all of us have the capacity to experience the fullness of life, but only to the extent that we are in the moment. When we function fully in the present moment, we improve our capacity to handle stress, worry, fear, and panic.

Allow the beauty and aliveness of this moment to clear worry poison and its companions from your life! Live fully alive to present moment awareness. Take a deep breath, and when you exhale, visualize stress as washing or falling away from your body.

PART IV

To this point, I have discussed how a fast-paced modern life, replete with its gadgetry and technological marvels, coupled with a focus on past or future events, can lead to fear, worry, and stress. Yet, there is a factor I have not mentioned, so please consider it carefully. The factor I refer to, is explained, below.

We are prone to living our lives as in a daze. Even though we succeed in making our way through life, adequately handling the situations that confront us, we are really living in a dazed, conditioned state.

In other words, to a great extent, our lives are lived on automatic conditioning. We attend to work, chores, routine tasks, in a day to day, repetitive daze, never stopping to question or to taste the freshness of the moment!

Hence, if we are victims of stress, high blood pressure, or related conditions, we do little to change the environmental cause(s) of those conditions. Rather, we labour on, often relying totally on drug therapy, while risking the many side-effects of those drugs. Please don't mis-understand me. I do not mean that prescription drugs are to be totally avoided. However, at the moment, we in the western world are a prescription drug-addicted society. We should do everything within our power to minimize their use in our personal lives. This is the pro-active approach to wellness.²

So, how do we break this conditioned daze?

Well, one way is by following the old proverbial saying, "Stop and smell the roses"! Stop, look around, and do something different from the usual

² Again, I must state that I do not mean we should avoid prescription drugs at all costs. If you have a condition that absolutely requires a prescription drug, by all means, take it!

routine. Even the act of taking a leisurely walk and/or relaxing in a quiet, natural setting, can greatly enhance present moment awareness. It can be the catalyst to break the automatic routine of daily life. It can help to reduce or control stress and its detrimental side-effects.

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PART V

The Exercises

In this 3 exercise, 21 day program, you are to perform each exercise for a 7 day period, as follows:

- Days 1-7, perform Exercise # 1
- Days 8-14, perform Exercise # 2
- Days 15-21, perform Exercise # 3

Please note that the exercises are to be performed in a quiet, natural setting. If you are unable to find a suitable outdoor setting, try to arrange a corner of a room for your practice. Surround yourself with plants, and/or other items from the natural world. You can also do this in the event that stormy weather prevents you from doing the exercises in an outdoor environment.

Perform the exercises once or twice, daily.

When you have completed the 21 day program, continue to practice with your favourite exercise, or use all of them. If you continue to use the three exercises, plan your schedule, and use only one exercise per session.

If you want to try something new, go to:

http://www.wildworldofplants.com/notes/nature_therapy.html

Exercise # 1

This first exercise is designed to bring you closer to the natural world. Also, to slow the pace of modern living habits, and to place you in the here and now. This will help to control the stress of modern life.

Assume a comfortable sitting position. You may wish to use a cushion or a chair. This exercise will slow your un-settled mind, stretch the limits of your patience, and improve your ability to observe and gain a greater awareness of the natural environment.

Relax. Observe the surroundings. Take note of the many shapes, colours, kinds of plant life, rocks, birds, animals and insects that happen to be present. Be patient and take your time with the process. Do it in an easy, relaxed manner. When you feel you have satisfactorily observed the surroundings, close your eyes, and listen for sounds you may have missed.

When you are satisfied with the extent of your observations (a maximum of 15 to 30 minutes), slowly inhale, hold the breath for 3 seconds, and exhale. Repeat three times. Relax. Open your eyes and remain sitting.

Casually look about you and be in the moment. Enjoy this time alone with Mother Nature.

Exercise # 2

This next exercise is to promote deep relaxation, and to help you cope with the stress of daily life.

To prepare for this exercise, you may want to lie on a yoga mat or blanket. It is important to be comfortable during the exercise.

Lie down, close your eyes, and relax. Imagine a fluffy, white cloud, forming under your body. The cloud is like a soft mattress, and feels wonderful under you.

Imagine yourself becoming very light. The fluffy cloud slowly rises, carrying you with it. Try to feel the motion as you float through the air. Enjoy the ride, and release your cares.

Later, when you are ready, imagine the cloud slowly sinking to the ground. It feels so gentle and wonderful. When you are safely on the ground, the cloud dissolves.

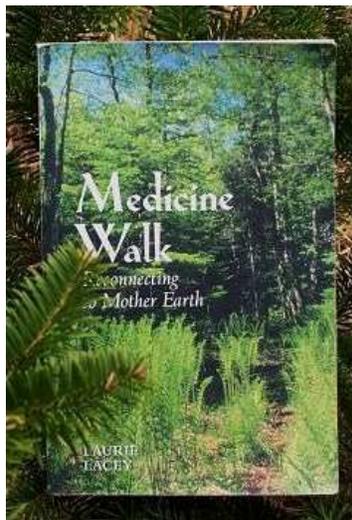
Open your eyes when you are ready. Enjoy the natural environment. Then, go about your daily affairs.

Note: If you have performed the first two exercises, regularly, you should experience more periods of calmness and contentment in your life.

Exercise # 3

This third exercise is designed to cultivate a feeling of connectedness to Mother Earth, and, in doing so, to foster balance in your life.

It is an earth meditation that should be practiced in privacy. It is actually Exercise # 24, in my book, *Medicine Walk*, p. 62. <http://hopurl.com/47762>



Relax. Assume a comfortable position, and take several deep breaths. Close your eyes. Feel the earth beneath you. Take a few minutes to think about the earth, its position in the solar system, and in the greater universe.

Think about yourself, and the importance of the earth to your life. Again, focus on the earth beneath you. Imagine a stream of energy from the earth, moving up into your body, and following the spine to your head and beyond.

Calmly meditate on that energy, and the feeling of connectedness to the earth.

When you feel ready, open your eyes and remain sitting. Relax. Enjoy the moment. This moment is all that really matters right now. The peace and calm of this moment is a good tonic for your health. In a sense, it is as beneficial as several visits to a medical practitioner.

Conclusion

I sincerely hope that you have enjoyed this free report, and that it has served to illustrate the importance of the natural world to your health and happiness.

You know, there is more to life than a daily routine, or the involvement with your career or occupation. Life is for learning, growing, loving, flirting, playing, laughing, and, yes, for being lazy on occasion, among other things.

My best wishes to you for a healthy, balanced, and fulfilling life.

Blessings!

Laurie Lacey
2 September 2006

Updated: 12 April 2010

Websites and blogs.

This is the website for my newsletter, Natural Healing Talk.

<http://www.naturalhealingtalk.com/>

This is my website on medicinal plants and trees, with a focus on Atlantic Canadian aboriginal medicines. It also promotes my freelance consulting practice. <http://www.wildworldofplants.com/>

I created this website for my book, Black Spirit: The Way of the Crow. The book is out of print, but I am putting the entire book online! Hard copies of the book are usually available online, and occasionally in used bookstores. <http://www.thewayofthecrow.com/>

Here is a website featuring some of my paintings!

<http://www.laurielacey.com/>

My nature blog, The Nature Writer's Digs.

<http://thenaturewriter.blogspot.com/>

My creative writing blog, Ol' Coyote's Chronicles!

<http://olcoyoteschronicles.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.medicinewriter.com/> (Online by Summer 2010)

<http://www.medicine-maker.com> (Online by Autumn 2010)

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My Twitter Address – let's follow each other!

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MySpace Page

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Facebook profile

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