

Eustress is Good Stress

Not all stress is bad. Eustress, is a form of stress that is desirable because it contributes to your well-being and sense of contentment.

Most times, when we talk about stress in our lives, we are actually referring to "dis-stress". Dis-stress comes from a feeling of being out of control. Eustress is a kind of stress which challenges and encourages you to excel in all aspects of your life.

Most of us will experience eustress during the following situations:

- ❖ accomplishing goals
- ❖ love relationships
- ❖ getting a promotion
- ❖ discovering a passion
- ❖ riding a rollercoaster
- ❖ experiencing a "thrill"

Eustress causes many of the same physical reactions as dis-stress, however, the eustress has a positive influence on our esteem, well-being, physical health, and sense of contentment.

How can Stress be Good for you?

Both kinds of stress affect your body and can have a cumulative influence on your health and well-being. Eustress is associated with more positive experiences in your life than dis-stress. Both kinds of stress trigger an adrenal response in your body which can effect your physical and mental capabilities.

With eustress, the adrenaline is used to move your body and mind forward in response to the needs of a situation or a relationship that you have identified. In setting goals, or identifying needs in a relationship, you begin to choose to trigger an adrenaline reaction in order to be able to achieve and sustain positive momentum in your life. (cont'd on page 2)

■ ***Not all stress is bad.***

■ ***Eustress is a form of stress which challenges, excites, and brings out your potential.***

■ ***Eustress can transform into dis-stress if you do not make awareness and management of your emotions a part of your daily life.***



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How can Accomplishing a Goal be Stressful?

When we accomplish a goal two things happen:

1. There is a sudden removal of expectation.
2. There is a discovery of another goal.

Good goals always lead to new ones. As you accomplish a goal, your life moves forward and you begin to see the next step that needs to be taken.

This can be overwhelming. Allow yourself time between ending one goal and starting another so you do not feel overwhelmed.

When you have been focused on accomplishing a goal and working towards it, the sudden completion of it may feel anti-climatic. The sensation is similar to post-partum depression. What had been your main focus and source of enormous

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Understanding how stress is expressed within your body will help you to manage stress and reduce dis-stress in your life.

"How do you physically react to the relationships in your life? What is your body trying to tell you?"

(cont'd) can Stress be Good for You?

Eustress has its resolution in a positive effect on your life. In love, the (eu)stress that arises can result in your drawing closer to your partner. In work, this kind of stress can result in an increased sense of accomplishment and value.

Dis-stress comes from situations that you cannot see any type of resolution in, or the resolution that is anticipated is not positive.

But what makes a resolution positive?

- ❖ If it increases your feelings of self worth.
- ❖ If it increases your sense of being able.
- ❖ If it increases your sense of personal worth (self-esteem)
- ❖ If it increases your ability to relate to others.

Eustress is a form of stress that comes from an action that will enhance the quality of your life.

Eustress vs. Distress

<u>Eustress</u>	<u>Distress</u>
Feelings of excitement	Feelings of panic
Belief in your ability	Disbelief in your ability
Outcome positive	Outcome negative/unknown
Can see the next goal	Can't see past the present

(cont'd) Accomplishing Goals

amounts of adrenaline fueled energy is suddenly no longer there. You are not just going through a kind of mental withdrawal from the intensity of the activity, but a physical one as well.

At the end of a goal, it is always a good idea to increase your physical activity and make plans to spend some time with friends.

Use the space between ending one goal and beginning another to reconnect with the people in your life.

This will not only get you through this time, but will also help to keep the people in your life involved as you grow and change.

Stress in Relationships

The fairy tales don't mention that Sleeping Beauty sometimes found being around Prince Charming stressful.

Relationships can be one of our greatest sources of stress because no where else in our lives are we that vulnerable. Even if you are not at the point in a relationship where you are communicating that vulnerability, two things are happening:

1. Your expectations of the relationship are being challenged by its reality.
2. Your ability to manage your emotions is being put to the test.

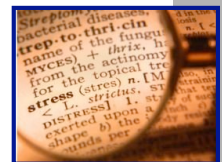
All of us have an ideal of what a relationship should be like. For some, this ideal has been formed from many different sources and may, as well, be

tied to a desire to have a relationship different from the ones we saw when growing up. That is a lot of weight to carry into a new relationship, and as you meet the reality of it, it can become very stressful, You are placed in a position of letting go of an ideal and yet, not being able to replace it with a known surety. Relationships, each and every one of them, have to be learned. Your ideals can help guide you, but they cannot be a demand you place on a relationship.

How well you can manage your emotions is put to the test almost everyday in any relationship – from the one with your partner, to the one with your child, to the ones you have at work. Because we are vulnerable in our relationships,

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Ideals are meant to guide, not dictate.

Eat not the heart

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- ❖ Write down what is causing your stress.
- ❖ Decide if it is eustress or dis-tress.
- ❖ Make a list of ways you can work to resolve the situation using the *Each Thing* exercise from issue 1.

(cont'd) Relationships

many of the intuitive skills we have learned to protect ourselves emotionally in new situations, are not present. The closer the relationship, the less these protective barriers will be in place.

While this is a very good thing that will allow for closeness between people, it can also produce high levels of stress. Without barriers, our emotions are easily triggered. Unless you know how to manage your emotions, you will wind up placing undue stress on yourself and the relationship.

What does it mean to manage your emotions? Managing your emotions means that you are able to take a step back and examine their source. Is what you are feeling really appropriate to the situation? Or has it brought up something from a past experience that makes you sensitive in that area.

Managing Stress

Teach yourself to recognize when you are experiencing stress.

- ❖ A faster heart rate
- ❖ Headache
- ❖ Fatigue
- ❖ Unusual Hunger
- ❖ Irritability
- ❖ Restless Sleep

Are all common physical symptoms of stress.

Your emotions rest in the right side of your brain. They are brilliantly catalogued, identified and connected to experience there. However, the right brain does not have any sense of time or logic. What happened to you one day, ten years ago, is as fresh in memory to your right brain as if it had just occurred. You have to learn to apply the rational reasoning of your left brain to help decide if what you are feeling really matches the present situation.

None of this is without stress. It can very easily turn into a severe dis-stress that can damage the relationship, but it can just as quickly become eustress. The better you can learn to manage your emotions, the deeper the relationship can become – because neither of you is carrying around the anticipatory dis-stress of causing an emotional reaction that is not appropriate to the event.

Learn to recognize these symptoms and what is causing your stress by keeping a diary of when they occur. Once you know what is causing your stress you can decide best how to work to manage it.

Exercise, diet and the right amount of sleep will help you ease your symptoms until you can resolve the stress in your life.