

Using Stress to Your Advantage

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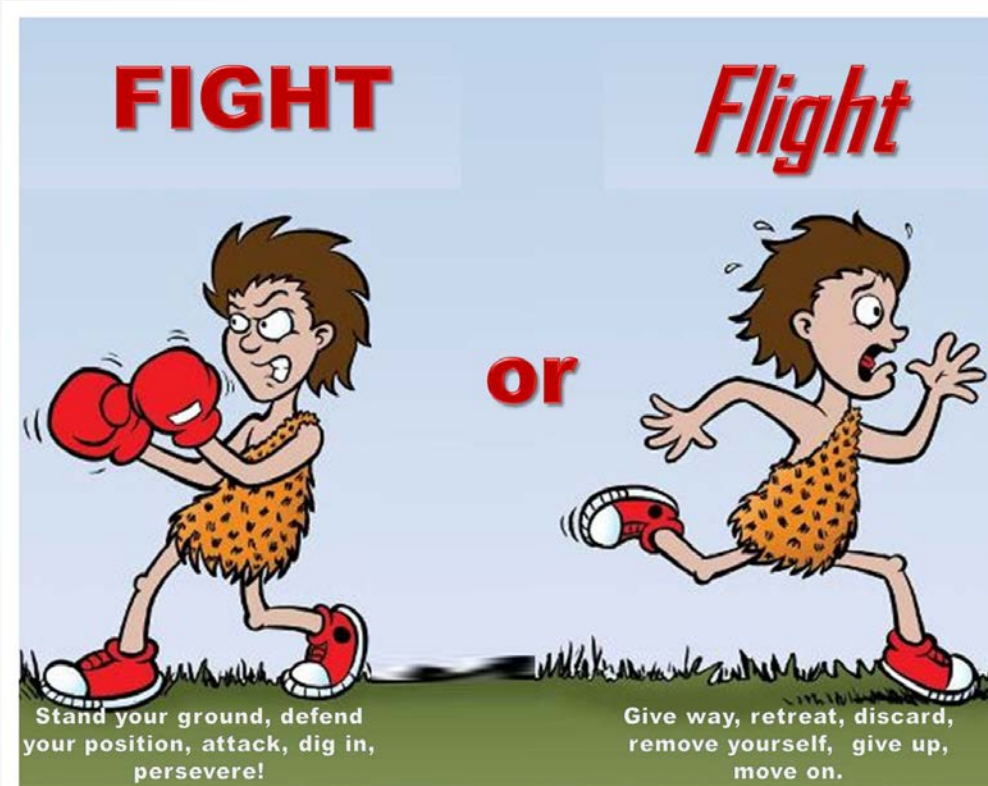
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Is Stress Bad for You?



Threat Response



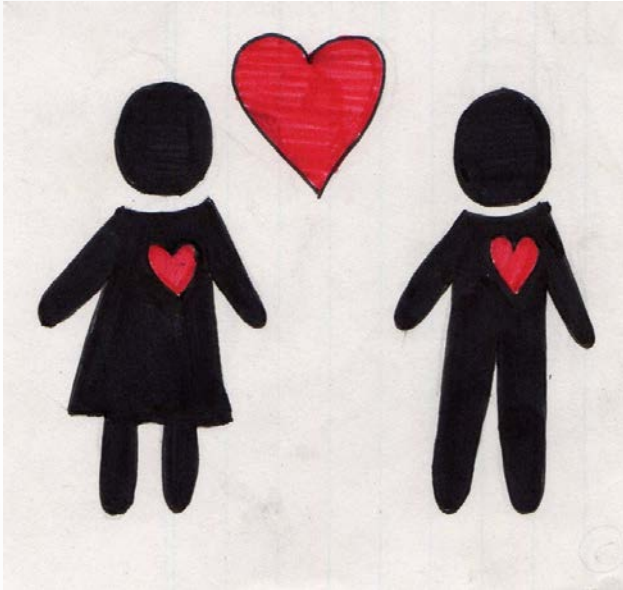
- Heart rate elevated, blood vessels constrict.
- Amygdala Hijack
- Default Response
- Associated with Cardio-vascular Disease

Challenge Response



- Heart rate elevated, blood vessels remain open
- Frontal Cortex activated
- Pupils dilate and hearing is sharpened
- Endorphins, Adrenaline, Testosterone Dopamine and Oxytocin

Oxytocin



- Neuro-hormone
- Dampens the fear response
- Associated with Courage
- Motivates people to seek human connection/support
- Strengthens the heart

Threat VS Challenge Response

Cortisol > DHEA

DHEA > Cortisol



Mind Over Mood Study

| | Speech | Math | Concentration |
|----------------|--------|------|---------------|
| Stress is Good | | | |
| Ignore Stress | | | |
| Control Group | | | |

Jamieon, J.P., Nock, M.K., & Mendes, W.B. (2012). Mind Over Matter: Reappraising Arousal Improves Cardiovascular and Cognitive Responses to Stress. *Journal of Experimental Psychology:General*, 141, no. 3, 417-22.

Results

- Stress is good group-physiologically showed a challenge response. Other 2 groups showed a threat response.
- Stress is good group- concentration was not significantly impacted by the negatively charged words.
- Blind experts rated the Stress Is Good for you group significantly higher than the other 2 groups
- This study was replicated with people diagnosed with Social Anxiety Disorder and the results were the same.

How to Help Your Child

1. Educate them that stress is a normal response to something they care about
2. Teach them to make use of the energy the stress gives them
3. Pay attention to the language they are using and help them use more realistic, helpful language
4. Help them make a plan and seek support

How do we help students?

5. Help them to remember the past and lessons learned
6. Teach children to ask the question, "What can I learn from this experience?"
7. Make sure they get a minimum of 8-9 hours of sleep a night





A few more Points About Stress

- We have to stop telling children they are smart!
- Praise children for effort, not ability

Resiliency

“The courage to grow from stress... It reminds us that we cannot always control the stress in our lives, but we can choose our relationship to it. It acknowledges that embracing stress is an act of bravery, and that it requires choosing meaning over avoiding discomfort.”

Kelly McGonigal, PhD “The Upside of Stress”