

## Keeping emotions in check when stressed

One of the easiest ways to tell when you are stressed or feeling overwhelmed is by your mood fluctuations. If you're constantly stressed and feeling the weight of your responsibilities, then your mood may change on an hourly basis, making for a miserable work life which can sometimes carry over into your home life as well.

So how do we keep our emotions in check when we are feeling stressed? Many times, it isn't because of what is going on around us, but rather what is happening in our head that causes the stress. When placed into pressured situations, we can find that we get tired or don't eat properly thereby affecting our body chemistry. This can make us more prone to negative self talk. We may begin to tell ourselves that what we are doing is really difficult and even impossible. We sometimes tell ourselves that we are in a horrible situation and it will never get better. This can lead to a bit of a spiral if we don't stay alert to it.

With all of these influences, it's easy to see why we can react emotionally when under pressure. The negative self talk can lead us to things that don't rebuild our energy. We may try to skip meals or eat foods that aren't healthy in order to find relief. We may stay up later in order to 'catch up' and 'get ahead'. These seemingly positive actions can create a domino effect and are actually more detrimental than they seem.

### Keys to maintaining good emotional balance:

- ✦ **Maintain good body/brain chemistry.** A diet high in sugars and excessive carbohydrates can lead to mood swings that you could accidentally attribute to your work or relationships. Caffeine, cigarettes, drugs and alcohol also cause huge interference. Eat plenty of fresh fruit, veg and fish to maintain great nutrition and chemistry.
- ✦ **Regular exercise and stretching** helps your body to release excess chemicals and energy, boost endorphins and relax muscles. It also helps oxygenate your blood and brain. 20 minutes a day is needed.
- ✦ **Drink plenty of fresh water.** Dehydration can lead to mood swings. Emotions are really electrical Energy currents in Motion which need water to conduct them. Our body content is 75% water. When we are in a stressful situation we need far more water than usual to stay hydrated and emotionally stable. Keep a bottle of water at your desk to remind yourself how much you have had.

- ✦ **Write down** what you think you are stressed about and all of the self talk that is happening about it. Don't deny it, face it. Writing it is important to get it out of your head. Ask yourself whether the situation, and what you are saying to yourself about it, is true. Would anybody else agree with you?
- ✦ **Calm and centre yourself.** Place your hand on your abdomen or the centre of your chest and breathe into that area under your hand. Put all of your attention to where your hand is and feel your breath causing it to move. Count the in - breath for 5 counts, hold a second and then count the out - breath for 5 counts. The key is to FEEL the breath in your chest or abdomen by putting all of your attention there. Whenever your mind distracts you just re-direct your attention to feeling your breath as you count. Do this until you notice a relaxing sensation start to take over. Trust me, it will if you persist.
- ✦ **Determine a positive course of action** to regain a sense of control over your situation. Do you need to delegate more? Do you need to re-negotiate the deadline? Do you need more resources or assistance? Do you fully understand what is required or are you hazy? What information do you need? Are you trying to be perfect or is 80% good enough? What is the purpose of the situation and what is an acceptable outcome for you and the stakeholders?
- ✦ **Find someone to talk it over with.** A different perspective sometimes helps us to find a new way of approaching the situation. It can also give us an opportunity to give our negative self talk a reality check and re-train it into something more productive.
- ✦ **Monitor your stress levels.** If you find that you are repeatedly feeling stressed about all sorts of things there may be a need to look a little deeper at your strategies for dealing with life. We are not formally trained to manage our emotions and energy. A few people seem to be naturally adept at it, but most of us struggle from situation to situation or go numb. There is now a good range of supportive techniques to help you to learn to become more emotionally flexible and resilient. Things like NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming), Heart Coherence and Meditation are all very useful for improving your ability to maintain positive emotional health.

### To Recap

When you feel under pressure and are getting more stressed don't bottle it up, catch it early before it seems insurmountable. When we are feeling tired and alone it is harder to talk ourselves out of negative thoughts which could cause us to react emotionally to situations around us. Sometimes we lash

out at people needlessly or cry for no reason—there are many different ways that we can react when we have all that bottled up tension and emotion within us. All we really want is for someone to notice that we are struggling and somehow help us out. But if we keep these feeling inside, how is anyone going to be able to help us? By learning to acknowledge our feelings, we can avoid having to feel like a pressure cooker about to burst.

Put your self care as a top priority and ensure that your diet and exercise is appropriate for your expected performance levels. A wise teacher once told me: ***"If you expect yourself to perform like a Formula 1 Ferrari, don't service yourself as if you are an old Holden. Put the right fuel in and maintain yourself in top condition."***

Get a support network around you to increase your ability to maintain positive self talk and emotional flexibility. Watch funny films regularly!

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#### About the Author

**Erica Bagshaw** is an expert in alignment. She helps you to create alignment with your purpose, thoughts, word and actions personally and in business. When you are aligned, your life, health, career and relationships can flow powerfully and effortlessly. Through coaching, teaching and speaking Erica helps clients leverage their energy and thinking to generate the outcomes that they seek. **She can help you to get clear on what is important to you or your business, decide a direction, create the steps, clear the blocks and follow through with it. Getting unstuck and opening up to new possibilities can be a liberating experience.**



- ✦ Improve your sales performance
- ✦ Clear your stressful habits
- ✦ Get better at being organised
- ✦ Be motivated instead of procrastinating
- ✦ Build your confidence
- ✦ Banish your fears and insecurities

Erica is a qualified NLP coach, licensed HeartMath Provider and meditation teacher with 16 years experience in the personal development field. With a corporate background in I.T., Business Systems Analysis, Recruitment, Sales and Management, Erica has a broad wealth of knowledge about careers and business. It is her experience and belief that anyone can develop the skills and resources within themselves to be confident, productive and excel at whatever they set their mind to.



**Can we help you?** Here are some of the things that people say about our services:

"Erica, I just wanted to really thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your help. I found the HeartMath program really effective in helping me get back to "that place of peace and contentment". As you know that I was really struggling with my busy schedule of running a successful medium sized business as well as being a father to four demanding children and a tired and stressed wife. Having just dealt with several family tragedies just made things almost unbearable until by extreme good fortune you introduced me to your program. I believe things just don't happen by chance and I'm so glad to have had the experience of running through this program with someone so professional, enthusiastic, knowledgeable while being able to keep it so light hearted and fun. Thankfully now I have found that sense of peace and contentment and now have the tools required to make sure I stay there. I feel like I have a "force field" against stress and anxiety, and when I'm feeling under pressure can bounce it away effortlessly. Thank you." T. Ibrahim, Fountainline

"Erica has the amazing ability to cut through the clutter and cut to the chase with her clients. Her work in goal setting, alignment and finding purpose is world-class - as good as and better than anything else I've seen or read." Gihan Perera, First Step Communications

"I learnt how to think clearly. Instead of having life control me, I learnt the skills to control my life by no longer rushing from one emotional response to another. I was shown a tool kit to be able to look at things objectively and make responsible decisions. It made me understand that I am in charge of my life and all that is in it, I have set it up. I have the choice of how I view it and only I can change it."  
Natalie – General Manager

"Working with Erica and the Alignment Group has been a truly life changing experience in my development as a person and in my professional endeavours. Erica's style, both professionally and on a personal level, is firmly based around the principles of honesty, integrity and a genuine desire to assist you in finding clarity, no matter what your situation. A wonderful coach and a wonderful person."  
Andrew Hill-Male, Owner, @HM Website Design

If you'd like to have a confidential discussion about how we may be able to support you **please phone Erica on 02 9923 1852**

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