



Your pathway to happiness and unconditional love

The year 2012 could also be called “The Year of the Stress Monster.” You don’t have to read about the Mayan prophecies for 2012; just watch the news. So it’s certainly timely to focus on building up your personal feelings of safety and security. As you read along in this series which started last month, you will note that Shimoff’s book on Unconditional Love describes seven steps with the “Doorway of Safety” being the first step. She describes the goal as having an “All’s right with the world” experience.

Happiness/love and stress/fear are not only opposites; they are mutually exclusive. We will never be open to wonderful positive feelings while our bodies and minds are consumed with negativity and fear. If you want to understand the physiological basis for this issue you can review previous information about the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system in articles on my website. Our alerting system works well whenever danger presents itself. When the crisis is resolved, peace and calm should be restored.

However, if you are like the majority of people nowadays, your alarm system is running on overdrive, constantly stimulated by the stress of modern life. When we’re nervous, constricted, protecting our backs, we’re running on fear. As you read these words, check out whether your muscles are tense, teeth clenched, neck tight, gut churning. Unless you are actually in danger (for example of a traffic collision, a slithering snake or other immediate challenge), you are suffering from an overactive and possibly chronic stress response chemically dominated by cortisol and norepinephrine. Not only is this hard on your body, decreasing resilience and immune functioning, it also causes illness and rapid aging.

So how do you release yourself from the clutches of the Stress Monster and find your way toward your path of happiness, toward Unconditional Love? If you’ve been reading my articles, you will have many anxiety reduction approaches to choose from. If you’ve been trying them out in your personal life, you may be far along toward achieving the sense of safety and security we all desire. If you haven’t been taking advantage of this opportunity, no problem; they’re all available in the Advice Line section of my website. I will mention a few approaches in the remainder of this article.

An interesting and fun approach is to recall that infectious song “Don’t Worry Be Happy” by Bobby McFerrin, the number one song on the Billboard Top 100 Chart in September, 1988. The lyrics actually contain valid stress management

Advice Line

by Dr. Betty Phillips



tips. So dust off your copy or download a new one, sing along, laugh, and relax. “In every life we have some trouble. When you worry you make it double.” The advice is very valid. When we dwell on a problem we end up having two problems: the original issue and the stress of worrying! “Cause when you worry, Your face will frown, And that will bring everybody down.” A frown on your face is an internal signal of distress, magnifying your own problems and spreading stress to friends and family.

Your challenge will be to maintain as much of your life as possible in an open responsive state of well-being. Here are a few other approaches which seem simpleminded but are actually profound and supported by research.

- **Do one thing at a time.** Constantly juggling and multitasking simply create stress and inefficiency.
- **Stay in the present.** Thinking about an uncertain future often calls up unnecessary worry about problems which may never materialize. Eckhart Tolle captivated the attention of the nation with his book, “The Power of Now” (New World, 2004.)
- **Walk outside.** Simply walking in nature will ground you into a state of peace and contentment and you’ll even get a chance to hug a tree. Seriously, I love to hug trees and say hello to Mother Nature.

The most effective approaches help us get out of our heads and into our hearts. Our heads are worry machines par excellence. Just try to concentrate on one worry and you see them multiply along with your physical distress. Go into your heart and breathe slowly and deeply; you’ll start to connect with beautiful feelings of love and peace. There are many techniques available for heart-based living. You’ll find assistance in the HeartMath program (www.heartmath.org) with free articles and downloads for stress-free living as well as books and materials for purchase.)

February, 2012, can be the start of your path toward inner peace and well-being and ultimately toward the blissful state of Unconditional Love.

“In every life we have some trouble. When you worry you make it double.”

Need Advice? Send Dr. Betty Phillips questions about individual, relationship, marriage or family issues to BettyPhillips@BellSouth.net or 466 Eagle Point Road, Pittsboro 27312. Questions can be anonymous. Betty looks forward to hearing from you!

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