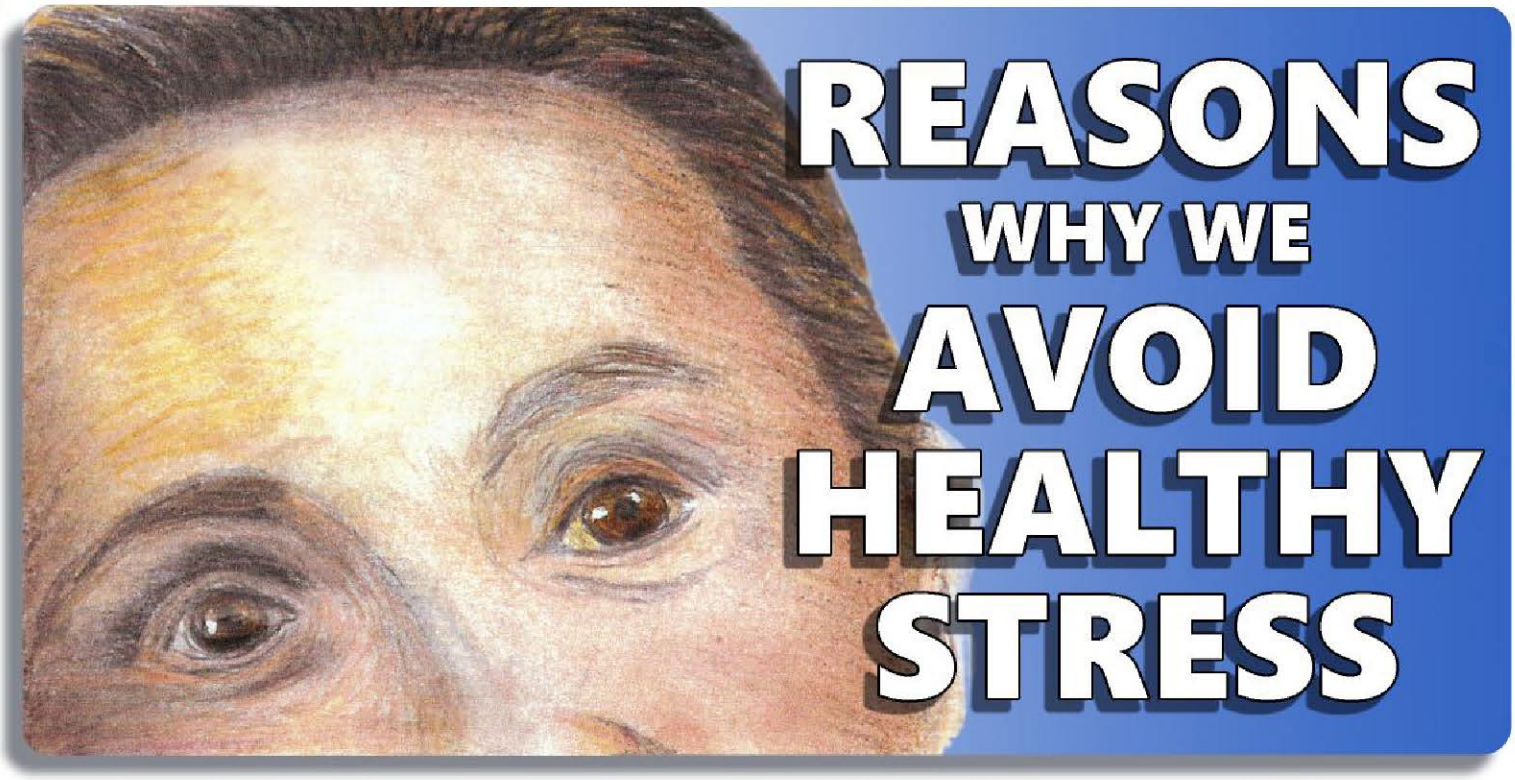

REASONS WHY WE AVOID HEALTHY STRESS

Stress, by definition, can amount to experiencing a broad range of irritations, from a slight discomfort to intense physical, mental, and emotional pressure, pain, or strain that permeates through the mind and body. Accepting healthy stress is about building the power necessary to manage and control hurtful or harmful reactions.

Healthy stress is what we experience to control the mind when we *need* to do something that the mind prefers not to do, or what we experience when we help the mind *avoid* doing something that the mind would prefer doing. We can also experience healthy stress when exposed to that which is complex, yet with effort, within our grasp to understand and gain healthful benefits. Healthy stress is, thus, about managing and controlling what would otherwise be hurtful and/or harmful ways we can react to emotions.

An appropriate reaction to healthy stress is an exerted effort to intellectually resist pacifying an unhealthy stimulus, and instead, embracing the benefits of a healthy alternative. When the mind avoids or ignores healthy stress, it can be in conflict-of-interest with our own well-being. Because we can justify, deny, and exaggerate feelings so easily, it can be tricky to identify a stressor as being a conflict-of-interest, without ample understanding, attention, and effort.

Our physiological and psychological equilibrium can be upset, whether we are dealing with stress to embrace a healthy disciplined objective or trying to get through an unfortunate traumatic experience. Stress is stress and pain is pain. It is through our intelligence that we learn to judge the difference, make the necessary adjustments to our thinking, and balance our equilibrium in healthy ways.

By frequently reviewing the categorized lists of reasons we avoid healthy stress presented here, you should be able to further clarify the roles stressful feelings are playing within your own thoughts and life experiences. In turn, this should enable you to improve your response to stress. Combined with other lists being provided in these lessons on healthy stress, as well as activities, it should soon allow you a healthier command of your mind, when dealing with stress.

This brief list distinguishes five categorized reasons why we avoid healthy stress, that are further emphasized on the next few pages:

- ☐ WE MAY HAVE A DEFICIENCY IN KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE
- ☐ WE MAY NOT REALIZE THE MIND HAS TRICKY AND DAMAGING PECULIARITIES
- ☐ WE MAY HAVE LEARNED INAPPROPRIATE REACTIONS TO EMOTIONS EARLIER IN LIFE
- ☐ WE MAY BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO TAKING LIFE TOO CASUALLY AND EASILY
- ☐ WE MAY NOT REALIZE HOW SUSCEPTIBLE THE MIND IS TO MISJUDGMENT

© Emotional Intelligence Institute 2024

These categorized lists identify several feelings and other obstacles that can prevent us from accepting healthy stress. (Beware: Some require self-honesty and humble admission!)

We may have a deficiency in knowledge and practice

The invisible boundaries we need to set for ourselves through healthy stress can be tricky to recognize and manage when we are lacking enough knowledge, rules and guidelines to help us accept them.

1. *We may not understand enough about what distinguishes healthy stress from other types of stress.*
2. *We may not know enough about the subtle idiosyncrasies and harmful affects of our emotions to consider the importance of regulating and strengthening control.*
3. *We may not have had enough quality coaching to inspire enduring healthy stress.*
4. *We may not have been exposed to particular techniques and practices that could help us endure healthy stress.*
5. *We may not know how to get ourselves to apply enough emotional fortitude to accept healthy stress.*
6. *We may not realize how much we're hurting or could eventually hurt ourselves and perhaps others by not embracing healthy stress.*

We may not realize the mind has tricky and damaging peculiarities

The mind can feel disoriented when facing stress, no matter whether the stress is about managing our emotions to embrace a healthy disciplined objective or to get through an unfortunate traumatic experience in healthy ways.

1. *The human mind is not always automatically attuned to healthy objectives.*
2. *We can get arrogant and defiantly rebellious in temperament, subtly or aggressively, about takingcare of our own health and well-being.*
3. *We can have the misconception that it is not important to control our emotions when it is painful to do so.*
4. *Letting our guard down can be such a subtle stealth-like change in the mind that we may not realize it is even happening.*
5. *Without our even realizing it, the mind can spend much more time in neutral and/or thinking aboutless important matters than paying close attention to the quality of our own behavior andconsequences.*
6. *We can easily get lethargic about the need for emotional strength, even when our own and others' well-being depends on it.*
7. *We can have thoughts that seem to be logical at the time, yet negatively guide us again and again toward less valuable and even harmful choices—without our even questioning our thoughts or their influence.*
8. *Even though energy is strengthened by perpetual motion, we can expect weakened motionless energy to get us moving, rather than use our intelligence to get our energy moving.*
9. *We can get stressed over a $4.00 problem as if it is a $1000.00 one and not even consider whether we are doing so and visa versa.*

© Emotional Intelligence Institute 2024

We may have learned inappropriate reactions to emotions earlier in life

When dealing with challenging emotional situations, our inappropriate reactions may be similar to how others reacted in front of us as children.

1. *Children can easily avoid calculating how much they are avoiding healthy stress and then habitually avoid it more than they realize as adults.*
2. *Once avoiding healthy stress becomes habitual, accepting it becomes even harder. In an avoidance position, we must consciously apply extra effort and employ clever leverage to displace such a habit's power.*
3. *We can learn as children to habitually remain so deeply involved and anxious about matters of the moment, that we don't consider other priorities, as adults.*
4. *Adults can continue to have a childish lack of concern about controlling emotions.*

We may be susceptible to taking life too casually and easily

We may just be having too much of a good time doing what we enjoy to consider any consequence from what we are ignoring.

1. *We may just not be interested in enduring stress, even for a healthy cause.*
2. *It's easiest to react in the most primitive way than to control emotions when dealing with stress, no matter what the cause or consequence.*
3. *It's much easier to avoid the immediate pain of healthy stress than accept it, when the consequence isn't often so immediate or clearly evident.*
4. *It's much easier to give in to strong temptations than to subdue them or delay gratification.*
5. *It's much easier to avoid healthy, yet stressful challenges, than to become passionate about them.*
6. *It's easy to continue to postpone dealing with healthy stress until later and later, then later again, without even acknowledging that we are procrastinating.*
7. *It's much easier to be lackadaisical about dealing with healthy stress than be seriously concerned.*
8. *We can avoid taking problems seriously enough to accept the healthy stress necessary for resolving them.*
9. *In some situations, it can be equivalent to spoiling ourselves when we ignore healthy stress, yet we don't realize it or don't care.*
10. *We may not realize what it takes to accept healthy options when they seem difficult, and so we just don't bother to pursue such options, or we go about pursuing them in the wrong manner.*

© Emotional Intelligence Institute 2024

WE MAY NOT REALIZE HOW SUSCEPTIBLE THE MIND IS TO MISJUDGMENT

Without nurturing healthy structure, there are a number of ways a mind can get malformed and contribute, subtly or openly, to destructive behavior.

1. *It's not easy to develop stability about how we process our thinking, especially when it comes to emotions.*
2. *We can too easily assume, exaggerate, and in other ways misinform ourselves about too many things, including healthy stress.*
3. *It's not nearly as easy to be patient as it is to be impatient, even when it is for healthy reasons.*
4. *It isn't easy to develop enough insightfulness and foresightfulness to help us accept healthy stress.*
5. *We can too easily deny that we have a problem enduring healthy stress.*
6. *We can, more easily than we realize, develop a conflict-of-interest between our well-being and special interests that allows us to avoid healthy stress.*
7. *We can get so involved in what we're doing that it can be stressful to pause and consider other important matters that may need our attention.*
8. *The mind can have an inappropriate predisposed notion that since avoidance hasn't caused problems in the past or yet, we don't expect avoidance to be consequential in the future.*
9. *Logic and meaningful aren't second nature. Most of the time, we must think seriously to recognize what's more logical and meaningful to do, and to take action, appropriately.*

© Emotional Intelligence Institute 2024