

YOGA & MEDITATION – THE ANTIDOTE TO STRESS

Stress is now one of the most common words in the English vocabulary, describing everything from a missed appointment to a life-threatening diagnosis.

So what really is stress?

Stress really results from perceiving obstacles to the fulfillment of our needs and desires.

The body responds aggressively to these perceived obstacles or threats. It's called the "fight/flight" response. It's a stress response that arises from a primitive part of the brain and is designed to ensure our survival.

During this fight/flight response, a number of physiological changes occur, which prepare the body to respond aggressively to a perceived threat:

- The heart beats faster.
- Blood pressure rises.
- Breathing becomes shallow and rapid.
- Blood sugar rises.
- Adrenalin production increases.
- The immune system weakens.
- The production of sex hormones decreases.

Numerous scientific studies have evidenced that chronic stress accelerates aging and makes you more vulnerable to serious illness, including heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, panic attacks, immune deficiency, depression, stomach ulcers, chronic fatigue, and migraine headaches

When you feel overwhelmed or anxious, it is easy to forget that you have choices and that there are many tools and techniques that can help you to feel better right away, a couple of these are yoga and meditation. A regular practice of yoga can help bring

balance to mind, body & spirit, and when your mental, physical and emotional selves are working in harmony with one another, you can experience clarity, a sense of wellbeing, calmness, peace of mind and enthusiasm for life.

Meditation gives you the experience of pure, restful awareness. As you meditate, the bodily reactions are exactly the opposite of the stress response: your breathing slows, blood pressure decreases and stress hormone levels fall. Primal Sound Meditation is a simple, natural way of experiencing this deep state of restful awareness.

I run weekly yoga classes and meditation sessions in Haworth & Keighley. You can find more information at www.sheilamurray.co.uk

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