

The Urgent Need For Stress ERADICATION

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HUMAN life is a complex phenomenon. It is observed that people are largely confused about how to manage their lives effectively. Sometimes, they feel a lot is to be achieved in life and they keep on working very hard but do not feel all that great in the process. At other times they do not want to perform as they feel that nothing is worth achieving. Whether we have some specific aim or no aim at all, still the performance continues. Not doing anything is also a performance of a kind. It is wise to get clarity about every activity one is supposed to do, beforehand.

Human life is full of situations and situations only. In some situations we are thrilled while in others we feel shattered. Whether we welcome them in a happy frame of mind or reject them in desperation, there is no escape from these situations. Something somewhere keeps on happening around us. Situations can be very simple or extremely complicated.

A simple situation practically means no problem. While a complicated one if not managed effectively in time, will lead to a series of uncomfortable consequences. Our need and desire are to remain comfortable and strong in life. Can we allow ourselves to remain confused and disturbed?

Is The Situation Really Complicated?

Is the situation really complicated in itself or we make it appear complicated? Had the given situation been complicated in itself then every person would have been equally affected in real life. It is not so. Some people feel highly disturbed in a widely accepted simple situation while others remain very cool and comfortable even in a so-called complicated situation.

Some people are afraid of letting the medical doctor give them an injection even while others feel very comfortable even about brain or heart surgery they are planning to undergo. Some people take fifteen to twenty tablets every day quite comfortably while for others even to swallow a small tablet is like experiencing hell. Depending on one's own practical exposure to various life situations, the reaction is thus positive or negative. Many mature people can behave weak and negative while children can behave constructive and positive. At the young age normally children do not have any serious negative exposure. So the smallest positive and logical exposure will make the child feel and behave in a very strong manner.

See the strange thing happening in British Columbia itself. Once an eight year old child, while coming from his school in Vancouver, met with an accident. He got an open wound injury in his right knee. His mother was very sensitive by nature. The child realized his responsibility and did not wish to hurt the feelings of his mother. He didn't go home but went to his family doctor and requested, "Uncle, please put stitches to my bleeding wound before my mother comes, otherwise she will cry". The doctor was pleasantly surprised. At that tender age this much was the unexpected understanding and maturity, which probably his mother did not have even at her age. After the minor surgery was done, he comfortably informed his mother.

Here, the child who is normally supposed to suffer and cry, was feeling very balanced and strong while the mother, who is expected to be balanced and caring was giving the opposite image. The doctor is now feeling sandwiched between the two. May be he feels to be in a position to take the child into confidence for giving the required counseling to the mother. In this case, the child preferred to make a simple start while his mother was feeling complicated in her mind. **The way we make a start, determines our response & others reactions.** The more

unsuccessful the exposures we have in life, the more complicated our life appears. **To become strong, it is important to have planned successful exposures, either self-initiated ones or provided by our seniors.** A pampered child has no exposure of his own, so he feels and behaves very weak when alone. For successfully managing various life situations the age is no bar.

Should We Blame The Situation?

People keep on blaming many of the situations as being highly complicated; the focus is rarely on understanding and developing the self. We find it comforting to blame others for our own mistakes. It is quite surprising that more of the highly educated people feel miserable in life than the uneducated ones. The vast but hazy exposure people are getting these days is making them more and more confused and unintelligent. Many of the previous generation's successful business magnates did not receive any formal education.

People focus only on gaining maximum knowledge. In the process, they simply ignore getting a deep and clear understanding of the subject concerned. When a person shares his own experiential understanding with us, we simply receive it as knowledge. It does not become our understanding. When we experience that knowledge in total depth of our respective situations, it immediately becomes our own understanding.

Whenever we plan to manage any situation with our newly acquired knowledge, it looks complicated. The untold fact is that we have been going through so many similar complicated situations around us - some of which we have managed also. As a result, we confidently start the management of every situation with a complicated approach. This way, we just end up feeling miserable and frustrated. We have put in the best of our efforts and spent a lot of our precious energy; still the results are different from the desired ones. It cannot be our fault. Centuries ago, the warriors were ruling the masses. So to generate and maintain their own importance, certain intellectuals made things highly complicated for the common people, to continue with their hold.

Was There No Choice Left?

Was there really no choice left for us except to follow this confused body of knowledge blindly? On the whole, we lack total clarity of our individual goals.

We tend to waste our precious energy in the elaborately explained complicated procedures, and the unfelt tragedy of this vast system is that we remain totally unaware of this fact. Generations and generations have been following the life styles of their elders. Perhaps we thought there is no other choice and we felt forced from within to adopt the complicated path.

Ask a question to self, "What do I want to get out of my life?" When we keep on asking "why" to every question, we get the ultimate answer: "Because I feel good this way". This leads to the goal of peace and happiness and is a fact. Whether we define it or let it remain undefined, every person born on this earth wants to be peaceful and happy only.

Is peace and happiness possible on this path? Is it advisable to follow the complicated and the difficult-to-understand approach in managing various life situations or should we not simply choose to use our common sense? If the complicated approach seems beneficial, we must adopt the same. But the fact is.....

Simple Is
Always Powerful
While
Complicated
Is Bound
To Be Weak

Because of certain bitter experiences, people become suspicious by nature. They feel that since by now ten persons have already cheated them, all others must also be established cheats. Because they could not effectively manage certain situations, they conclude that no solution is available. It is a normal misconception that only self is intelligent and all others are below average. For them, it is difficult to accept anything or anybody at a simple level.

For the respective understanding and management, every situation needs a thorough in-depth assessment. Normally, people attempt to start managing only with a superficial assessment of the situation at hand. They make their ill-equipped and unsuccessful efforts. Then they tend to blame luck for all their failures.

Strategy To Feel The Depth

Be it a game, a war, a business proposal or any social function, a well-researched strategy is necessary for its success. Before making a start, we must gain depth on how to play. When we formulate a strategy to play and win the game, we become comfortable and strong to make a start towards victory. Just like the game of chess, in which before making the next move, we must feel through at least the next seven moves of our opponent. That means his would be reaction to our move and then our possible reaction to his move and so on ... If we ignore this important strategy then our defeat is almost guaranteed.

"How do we feel the depth of any positive or negative situation?" is a million dollar question. Let us feel the practical and simple-to-implement strategy. Till the relevant depth is felt on the subject, we need to live the consequences in our imagination as if those are already happening. And if we are unable to feel this way then we must learn first, on how to feel the relevant depth. For this experimental plan, let us focus on a hypothetical situation.

Situation

Suppose you wish to develop Self for feeling the depth about a particular proposed business relation, i.e. the Managing Director of your client organization. You are planning to have a joint collaboration and are scheduled to sign an agreement. If this deal is a balanced one, it can prove to be highly profitable for all times to come. If you are unable to feel future consequences before signing the agreement, it can also prove to be disastrous. Your need, on top priority, therefore is to learn to understand the concerned designated person at the earliest because you cannot afford to delay certain delicate decisions.

Your strategy to gain similar depth should be: *"Plan to meet ten Managing Directors of some other organizations per day for a minimum of ten days on a courtesy call"*. In ten days, you have felt around one hundred persons. Isn't it? Amazingly, the time taken to feel the depth of the first person was much more than that on the last person. Secondly there will be a world of difference between the depth you have experienced during your meeting with the first and the last

person. At this stage you are very clear about the quality of questions you need to ask because only the correct and relevant information is responsible for the decision to happen.

Why To Perform?

You wish to develop yourselves. You are keen to justify your day-to-day responsibilities. You want to help your near and dear ones. You are focusing on gaining name and fame. You love somebody to the extent of showering all your resources on them or you hate someone to the extent of taking a fatal revenge. Even if you have no plans to achieve anything specific at all, you simply cannot escape actions (conscious or even at sub-conscious level). There is no choice. The voluntary activity where you have a choice is also directing us to do something. The path of escapism is simply not possible. On your part any attempt to escape voluntary or involuntary actions will only give a feeling of frustration.

No Escape

Similarly, when you are confronted with an actual realistic situation, there is never an escape. A temporary escape is only a diversion for the time being. It may give a short-lived satisfaction as in the old 'pigeon and cat story' wherein the pigeon closes its eyes when confronted with a cat, imagining that the cat has gone away. Till today the cat is still smiling at the pigeon's escapist approach. The fact is that the total escape is neither practicable nor possible. Those who attempt to escape can never be peaceful as the relevant pressures keep on increasing.

In any given situation you are bound to make decisions and perform accordingly. Non-performance will also lead to some situation which will need a further decision. So escape again is not possible. According to the understanding and depth in one's life, the same situation will mean differently to different people. The less depth we have in life, the more disturbed we will be. Of course material resources are important but not enough on their own to generate peace and happiness.

Investment Capacity

Any person who has lots of money may not have the mind to invest lavishly. His visible focus is to collect and possess money. At the most he only behaves like a caretaker. At the same time, a person who is not rich can plan to invest even bigger amounts beyond his present capacity with full ease. **A person who has the mind to invest, knows the value of money.**

For example, if two persons have lost CAN \$ 2000 each on the same day they will react to it differently. For one person, this loss may mean nothing because he is in the habit of giving this amount to various charitable institutions as a donation every now and then. He also feels comfortable in entertaining his guests in the five-star culture. He knows the difference between an investment and wasteful expenditure. He is not possessive of his money but knows how to earn money and then spend it wisely. He believes in living in the present. He is not disturbed at the said loss but is focusing his energy on how to generate more funds.

But for the other person, it is his salary for the month. He has a limited exposure to life. For him it is indeed a difficult situation. If by chance on the same day, he wins a lottery of CAN \$ 5000, this situation will again be no longer difficult for him. He immediately becomes comfortable. **In life, whenever you are unable to manage a situation, you normally refer to that as a PROBLEM.**

Consequences Are The Problem

In fact, the problem is not the realistic loss of money but the consequences attached to it. How to pay the rent of the house? The children will demand money to pay the school fees, otherwise the teacher will ask them to keep standing in the class or the principal may choose to strike off their names from the school. His ailing wife needs medical care. How can she be admitted to a nursing home? How will he manage to pay her medical bills? Next week is the marriage of a cousin. Oh yes, there is also a contributory party in the office. He will feel highly embarrassed to face all those people who will come to collect monthly bills.

If his boss immediately sanctions him an advance of the same amount, to be returned in the next five years, again there is no problem. So, loss of money or the unacceptable action is not the problem. Even on the death of someone people normally weep and feel disturbed over the loss of those certain benefits they were getting from the deceased, even if it was emotional comfort. So only the consequences are the problem and not the loss of money or the person.

Feeling Of Fear

Normally, whenever one is unable to find a viable and easy-to-implement solution to one's problems, a feeling of **fear** comes into the mind. Nothing untoward has happened but the person is literally trembling from within as if he has been caught red handed and fully exposed. A feeling of unmanageable guilt has entered his already disturbed mind. He starts giving irrelevant justifications to what he feels would have happened.

People around him have a specific image about his personality and behavior. They are feeling confused about what he is talking. They never experienced him in that state of mind. Their negative and confused reaction to what he is doing is quite natural. An ill-conceived negative chain starts in the mind of that person and also of the people in his circle. Now something visibly negative has happened in the reaction of others. Because of this chain reaction, he further starts getting a feeling that now almost everybody knows the worst that has happened to him.

He is making it a point to avoid all those concerned people and situations. He is withdrawing into his own shell, feeling as if nobody understands him. All this has completely blocked his mind. He feels very lonely and totally cut off from the world and his surroundings. The tragedy is that as yet nothing negative has happened and the poor fellow is feeling miserable. He is losing control over himself and cannot manage as desired. Perhaps he is not aware that.....**once the negative process starts, the situation simply goes out of control.**

Many people claim and act to remain positive but it takes time before they become fully positive. Because one is trained to live and accept the negative, it actually becomes very difficult for a person to initiate the constructively positive track.

Let us take the case of an animal. While going on a lonely road, a person comes across a dog staring at him. The immediate reaction is that this dog might bite him. Surprisingly the dog also is developing similar feelings while looking at the person. Both the parties start with the same negative feelings. In the process of defending, both prepare to attack each other. As they come closer, the dog starts barking and the person picks up a stone. Throughout, both are under the firm grip of panic. The person throws the stone at the dog; in response the dog jumps and literally bites the person.

This will never happen if the person does not initiate the first negative feeling. We can simply pass by the dog and the dog will also be equally comfortable. When we are not sure of self and attempt to start with a positive note, it requires lot of courage to pass through that area smoothly.

Fear - Worry - Fear

As the time passes, one starts to feel future consequences in one's imagination. At a very fast pace one is coming under the grip of fear. Initially, there is a small bout of fear. This fear is just a reflex action from a very weak and negative base. It is not very easy to come out of that state. The negative process has just begun,

so initially there is a feeling that fear is going away but the fact is it is just diluting its effect temporarily. One remains in the grip of a *mild attack of fear known as WORRY*.

When the state of worry continues for some time, the negative feelings silently keep on multiplying and there is one more attack of fear. Again, the intensity of fear becomes diluted leading to the state of worry. The fear and worry supplement and complement each other. This chain of "fear-worry-fear...." goes on becoming more and more powerful.

Only In One's Imagination

Worry exists only in one's imagination and never in reality. The grip of fear becomes very powerful with continuous multiplication of negative feelings and one accepts the negative imagination as something real. It is our choice to feel anything in imagination. We can feel positive or negative. The reality is that we have the freedom to experience any feeling. Normally we tend to start from the negative. It looks that the negative is bound to happen. *I am not so lucky to receive the positive. People tend to forget their entire positive life of the past but the negative remains very much alive in their memory.*

In reality, nothing has happened. Sometimes a person will mistake a rope for a snake in the dark. Similarly one is feeling self-generated highly charged but baseless negative imagination as real and getting panicky. It is impossible to fight with nothing in front. The more efforts one makes to fight, the more frustrated one becomes. It is an unmanageable clash of imagination with reality thus leading to a disturbed mind.

Let us take the situation of a happily married young couple. The husband is normally reaching home at 6 PM on the dot. The wife eagerly starts waiting for him for the evening tea much earlier than that. One day the bell does not ring at 6 PM as expected. She starts feeling uncomfortable. Some irrelevant doubts enter her mind.

Maybe he has been attracted to some other girl. No, no, it is not possible. God cannot be so cruel to me. The time now is 8 PM. Still he has not come. Many ideas keep on disturbing her. Nothing is clearly coming to her mind. The door bell has rung two to three times in between but it was somebody else. She felt disappointed.

She suddenly realizes, "Oh yes, it could only be an accident". She feels horrible from within. She starts perspiring heavily. It cannot happen. I am worshiping God daily. God

is very kind to me. She starts her evening prayers. Now it is 10 PM. Still there are no signs of his coming home. No message even.

*What could have happened? It certainly is a very serious accident. May be he is.....
No, I do not agree with this feeling of mine. Only a year ago we were married. It is not possible but this much late. May be he is no more.*

*It is 12 MIDNIGHT and suddenly the door bell rings. She trembles from within so is unable to move. How can she open the door? The bell rings again and again. With lot of difficulty she opens the door and is DEEPLY SHOCKED..... **to see her husband alive**. In her imagination she had accepted that the worst had already happened. So it was difficult for her to come out of that situation. She was totally numb for a couple of minutes.*

It is indeed an unmanageable heavy clash of reality with imagination. The circumstances over the years have trained the human mind to escape from the present. People can only predict the future but nobody can ever be sure of the future. Whatsoever has come even in expert's imagination may not happen. The negative chain in our imagination is so strong that even the strongest person also feels trapped and weak. He feels compelled to escape from reality. **Whenever we accept in imagination that the worst has already happened then any advice from anybody carries no meaning.** The fact is that advice is coming from the present base while imagination has gone far away from the present. The two do not match. The badly trapped person strongly feels that there is no solution to his situation. And that is also true: there is no solution to what does not exist.

Towards Stress

Now clearly, fear along with worry builds up an increasing pressure in the imagination. Imagination is very powerful. We can give any track to our mind and it runs on that negative or positive track accordingly. Imagination is mostly an emotional state of mind so it can easily divert a person onto the unrealistic negative path. Because the speed of mind in that direction is increasing constantly, it becomes difficult for any body to stop that negative path. Under these circumstances the control becomes almost impossible.

As negative feelings multiply very fast the person tends to link the ultimate negative point with the starting point. He develops a wrong feeling that the same point has just been magnified but the fact is that he has gone far away from where he began. In the beginning he also had a positive choice but now the negative has overpowered him. The negative

grip has become very strong. When imagination appears close to reality it attains a level of pressure which cannot save the mind from disturbance.

This highly charged negative imagination which puts pressure on the person is called **STRESS**. This pressure can also be because of any direct problem being faced in the present. If we limit the problem only to the present situation, the required control remains. But again at the sub-conscious level, one starts feeling the future consequences. **Any person under stress cannot feeling normal and balanced.**

Now the question is: Is this pressure life-long? You must have experienced that...

Nothing
But
CHANGE
Is
Permanent

So this highly uncomfortable state also needs an escape. Let us understand this concept with the help of an inflated balloon. We can compare the balloon with a human being. *The pressure you put on the balloon is the stress which leads to some changes on and in the balloon.* Newton's third law of motion states "Action and reaction are equal and opposite". The actual pressure we are exerting on the balloon will have an equal and opposite reaction. The body of the balloon will show some changes and even the inside pressure will be affected. Stress has an equivalent effect on the human mind and body. Before actual pressure is exerted on the mind, a feeling of fear may come about the harmful effects of that stress. Reaction also starts in one's imagination. If the strongly negative situation is accepted in one's imagination there will be an equal and opposite reaction as that of the actual. As long as the negative remains only in imagination, the harmful

effects are not unbearable but the moment it becomes reality, escape is very difficult.

Generating Tension

As we understand, stress generates a pressure within the mind, commonly known as **TENSION**. The balloon also in that state of tension does not look appealing. Depending on the level of stress, tension builds up accordingly. The more the stress, more is the tension leading to much more discomfort. We do not want to live an uneasy life. It is shocking to know that people love to live in tension. They feel there is no other choice. If they are not aware of what is present that does not mean that it does not exist. They prefer to remain blind to this fact. As if they have married to worry which has become a part of life and tension is their own baby that needs proper pampering. How can they live without it?

Many people want only a male child, especially in India. It must be a very common practice with Indians living in Canada also. When a female child is born, instead of happily accepting they tend to blame the mother or even God. Their whole life is filled with hatred and suffering. They link their male child with a false feeling of status. He can be a would be partner in business, their caretaker during old age or even keeping the family name alive. The male child, at the time of need, may not give the ultimate comfort.

The focus of majority of people is only on feeling the depth of pleasures. It is very important to know and feel the difference between pleasures and happiness. **Worldly pleasures are always short-lived while the happiness can be permanent.** In this world every material pleasure once experienced will make us more and more restless to experience it again. Any pleasure that leads to sufferings cannot be a pleasure and is far from happiness. We must focus on peace and happiness. If we do not know the right path towards a life full of peace and happiness, it does not mean that the option of the right path does not exist. Tension, once experienced will initiate multiplication of negative feelings.

The Visible Strain

The effect of stress on the body is called **STRAIN**. When we tell somebody not to over strain, we generally refer to the physical aspect only. Whenever the mind is tense, the muscles are equally affected. The strained expressions are clearly visible on the face and other parts of the body. We have a limited store of energy and it is very precious. When the muscles are involved, energy is diverted towards the body muscles and is wasted. We feel weak and lethargic.

Just before any examination, when not fully prepared people normally tremble. The focus is on the body and that is a true expression of strain. Examination is not only academic. At every stage in life, every situation is indeed an examination. Many a time the situation at hand does not need any specific physical involvement but the stress that leads to tension will have an equal effect on the body as strain. The body muscles need energy and in the process we feel physically weak.

Similarly the mind also needs energy to remain tense. Here the energy is diverted towards the mind and is again wasted. As a result we experience an overall fatigue. As the negative multiplies very fast, we are moving towards an undesirable serious situation of continuously increasing tension and strain. *Let us learn to arrest the negative the moment it comes and convert that into the positive, so that the most precious step i.e. our initiative is never blocked.*

The simple question for all of us is –

“Why build up Stress *first*
& then plan to Manage it
WHEN it can be ERADICATED at the very
first place?”

Dr Rakesh Chopra
Corporate Spiritual Mentor

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