

Stresshacking – Day 5

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hacking stress limits
and mindset

I know it sounds obvious to say this, but if you want to reduce your stress then you need to address the cause of it. But we don't always do that. What we often do is feel powerless and do nothing about it at all. We might manage the symptoms of stress but often only when they get in the way of us 'carrying on as normal.'

Some causes of stress don't have an easy fix, and take a longer term approach. If you tend to be a worrier, for example, you might feel it is 'just who you are' and that it won't change. But it can change. You can change. You just haven't found the right approach yet. Given the right tools and determination, anything can change.

Tip #1 Be Solution Minded

Whenever you face a problem, stress, or a challenge, ask yourself if your focus is on finding a solution. Ironically, many people get so wrapped up in thinking that the situation shouldn't be as it is that they forget to actually try to do anything about it. So, to identify the cause of your stress and to help you to address it, ask yourself these questions...

- What am I stressed about?
- What needs to change?
- What's in my control? What isn't?
- What outcome do I want?
- What can I do myself to help bring this outcome about?
- What do I need to help me? Who do I need to speak to about this?
- What next step do I need to take?

Tip #2 Addressing The Symptoms & The Cause

Sometimes, on the surface, a symptom can appear to be the cause of a problem when it isn't. Drinking too much alcohol or overeating, for example, may cause problems and create a negative cycle of events, but they are symptoms rather than the root cause. The question is what drives that behaviour? That's what needs addressing. If you just try to use willpower to stop overeating without addressing the reason you are doing it, you will likely stay trapped in the cycle of it. If you feel a lack of self-worth you will keep creating situations in your life that confirm that to you, until you address your lack of self-worth.

Lasting solution requires addressing the root cause, like pulling up the roots of a weed rather than just trimming the leaves. Both symptoms, and the cause of them, need addressing. I know that's obvious but it still needs saying. If stress is causing you to have tension in your neck and shoulders then getting a massage will help the symptoms, and addressing the stress that is causing the tension will address the cause.

Tip #3 When The Cause Of Stress Is Beyond Your Control

I know that sometimes the cause of stress might be a situation that is out of your control. Whilst that can be difficult, let it be a clear message to you to turn your focus onto the bit you can control....your response to the situation that is out of your control. If you can't change the situation you face, you have to change the way you face it. Equip yourself to meet it, as best you can.

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Eckhart Tolle, author of *The Power Of Now*, says that we always have a choice as to how we respond to any given situation that is causing us a problem. Firstly, is there anything we ourselves can actively do to change it? If there isn't, then can we accept the situation as it is? We don't have to like it or agree with it but can we accept that it is as it is, and that it won't change. Thirdly, if we can't change it and we can't accept it, could we remove ourselves from the situation entirely? Failing to actively choose one of these responses keeps us on a loop of frustration and moves us no nearer to solution. Not all options are possible for every situation, but acknowledging that we are choosing one of them enables us to take control of our response to life. So, under the wise advice of Eckhart, ask yourself which of these three choices you are making in your response to the cause of your stress. Can you change it? Do you need to accept it? Or could you remove yourself from it?

In summary today then....

- What is the cause of your stress and what are the symptoms of it? Are you addressing both?
- What can you do about it?
- What do you need?
- What is the next step to take now?

Now take that next step. One step at a time you can deal with whatever you are facing... You've got this!