

How To Stay Balanced During Stressful Situations

Do any of these scenarios ring a bell?

1) You're driving along the road and someone cuts you off. Immediately you start feeling yourself getting enraged and end up losing your concentration. Various emotions spring up inside and you find yourself increasingly upset.

2) A friend says she'll call back. It's 3 hours later and you haven't heard from her. You start to feel hurt and find yourself falling into self-pity. Though you try to not think about it, your mind keeps wandering back to this and other similar incidents.

3) At a sales meeting you give a short presentation. A few times you get tongue tied. A fellow co-worker makes good points, sounds completely composed and seems to receive more recognition than you do. A deep disappointment descends and you find it's hard to pull out of these feelings to get back on track.

This booklet is designed to be a practical guide for stress busting and to help nip in the bud the knee-jerk reactions to common situations. Instead of losing your motivation, getting discouraged or totally breaking your concentration... you'll be able to regain control and restore inner-calmness... once again moving with focus and confidence.

This will put you in a position to make clear decisions and harness your true potential.

The quickest techniques I've found to gain elevation and stop negative emotions are:

- A) Breathing Stress Busters- Breathe Away the Tension.
- B) Stretching and Moving- Shake It Out!
- C) Meditate – Find the Center Nothing Can Disturb.
- D) Change the Thinking That Creates the Reaction- Stop the Negative Seed from Sprouting.

Depending on your physical setting at the time, one technique may be more appropriate than another one. You don't want to meditate with closed eyes while driving!

Master your mind and you are no longer its slave. Things will still go up and down since that is the nature of polarities, but you can stay in the eye of the storm. If you are spending most of the day reacting then your true freedom is constricted.

Just as a computer needs to have its files deleted (on occasion) to be able to function more efficiently, so our minds need to be house cleaned so that we have room for new stories, dreams and aspirations.

Tip #1: Weeding Your Garden

Did you ever notice that if you can catch a

weed when it's ½ inch high that it's very easy to pull out? But what happens if you neglect it and it grows 20 feet high?

You'll need a whole landscaping crew then to remove it !

The mind works the same way: If you can catch the initial negative thought and pluck it out before it has deep roots, the mind stays balanced. However, if you feed it and let it mushroom, you'll soon be in a stew.

If you read nothing else in this booklet, follow this one tip. Don't let something snowball, but instead, become sensitive to the initial twinge and use all your resources to prevent the emerging emotion from sinking your awareness.

Tip #2: Weed Once Again in 3 Minutes

The mind is *very* tricky and you might think you nipped it in the bud but a few minutes later the emotion or thought may sneak back in.

Clear your mind a second time so the seed won't sprout. Don't let the weed grow and don't fall into the "*I'm just gonna think about it for a second*" trick. It may last days!

It's similar to trying to eat just one potato chip. Ask yourself if this is really worth your energy and time.

Remember

The top 2 tips are the essence of the way to

achieve a balanced awareness. They will keep your awareness steady and eliminate knee-jerk reactions. Spend a lot of time practicing them and you will see wonderful results.

Tip #3: Change the Channel

To help stay at this new awareness, change the channel consciously by reading an inspiring quote, writing something down that's motivating or elevating yourself.

Change your attitude, change your latitude!

Did you ever find yourself **stuck** watching a TV melodrama that you couldn't shut off? It's only if you click to something else that you find the relief and wonderful sense of liberation from being a prisoner. This takes Will, Focus and Persistence and it strengthens each time you exercise it just like a muscle.

Tip #4: Keep a Sense of Humor if Someone is Pushing Your Buttons

Just as a kid loves to pull on a dog's tail and watch him yelp, people just love to find someone's "buttons" or pet peeves and see if they can get a reaction. It seems to be human nature to want to see if we can get a "rise" out of someone. Keep a sense of humor when you see this happening and don't let the other person get the response they hope! Everyone has buttons that can be pushed but the person interested in controlling their mind doesn't let this happen too often.

Tip #5: Catch Your Negative Thoughts and Replace Them with Nourishing Ones

We all fall into discouraging thoughts at times, but it's good to immediately detect them and not let them develop. For example, if you lose a job interview and see that you are saying to yourself, "I'm a loser. I'll never be picked," etc. STOP! Then... replace these thoughts with ones that recall your strengths, skills and achievements.

Don't buy into self-negating statements:

Look instead at your character, your dignity, your potential and contributions. We are what we think.

Tip #6: Don't be a Slouch

If you find yourself slumping or slouching, straighten out your back . This may seem like a small point, but slouching cuts off your breathing capacity (which effects moods). It also is a message that you give out to the world and people may read it as apathy or laziness even if you are very hard-working.

Tip #7: Review the Changes You've Made Over the Years

Sometimes we forget that we've been able to create changes in our lives and uproot ourselves from old patterns. Remember that former routines don't have to be repeated. Feel your ability to change the direction of your emotions and will. You don't have to go

down an old path. We are not mechanical beings but we have freedom and character. Don't be a robot! Instead remember areas of your life you've already succeeded to change and that this is a skill which you already have.

Breathe it away

Tip #8: The Mind will follow the breath

Did you ever notice how your breathing pace influences your moods? The yogis discovered that breathing slowly and deeply greatly improves our health and effects our emotions. Usually we breathe 15 times in a minute. They recommend that we try to reach 3-4 breaths per minute to extend our lives and achieve serenity.

A) Long deep breathing

If you've ever watched a baby breathe you must have observed the way his little belly fills up with air. As westerners, we are always holding in the stomach in order to look skinny.

Place your hand on your belly and begin to breathe , first filling in at the diaphragm area. Continue this breath and feel your ribs expanding and going outward. There's still a bit more room and continue to take in more and more air like a balloon expanding. You'll feel the shoulder area rising. Hold the breath now for a few seconds. Slowly exhale, reversing the process. When you reach the diaphragm area, keep squeezing every last drop of air

out. Now, hold the air out for a few seconds. Begin again. Once you get the hang of it, you don't need to use your hand on the belly area.

This is excellent for neutralizing emotions and for achieving self-mastery.
(3-5 minutes)

Tip #9: Don't forget to breathe during a tense situation

Did you ever notice when you are tense that you may hold your breath in?

We often won't breathe when we are experiencing something negative because on some level we believe we are protecting ourselves that way. If we don't breathe we assume nothing can get in. However, it's good to remember that things work the other way around: By breathing in the face of a tense situation, we can have the energy, stamina and equanimity to deal with stress effectively. If we waited for everything to be perfect before we took a full breath, we'd be dead! There is rarely a time when everything is in harmony- when the finances, the job position, the relationship, the grandchildren, the parents, the physical health are all smooth. It is our attitude, however that helps carry us through these situations and makes them much easier to cope with.

Tip # 10: Energize with the Breath of Fire

This Breath of Fire is a cleansing and energiz-

ing breath, powered by abdominal contractions.

Sit comfortably with a straight spine. Rest your hands on your knees, palms up, with your fingers in gyan mudra (touching the tips of the index fingers to the tips of the thumbs). Breathe fairly rapidly (about 2 or 3 breaths per second) through your nose, while you pump your navel point and abdomen - pulling them sharply inward on the exhale, and pushing them out during the inhale. Your chest should be relaxed. When you're finished, inhale deeply and hold the breath while you pull the energy up into your higher centers. Exhale and relax.

This is a balanced breath with no emphasis on either the inhale or the exhale. Try thinking of it as one continuous breath being pulled in and out. You won't hyperventilate if you don't breathe through your mouth.

Start practicing breath of fire for no more than three minutes at a time. (from the book "Tantric Numerology" by Dr. Guruchander Singh Khalsa, D.C. p. 121)

When to Use this Breath:

- *Before a meeting to calm nerves*
- *If you experience mid-afternoon fatigue and wish to get energized*
- *To dissipate depression or anger*

• **A good way to learn this is to picture that you are blowing out a candle. Do this several times successively with the mouth. Then switch to the nose. The exercise is done entirely through the nose with the inhalation and exhalation. Don't worry if you get it backwards, just start over again! The chest should be still.**

Move and Stretch to Break Out of Unwanted Reactions

Tip # 11: Shrug it Away

We hold a LOT of tension in our shoulders. The expression “shouldering burdens” comes to mind. In the Eastern Traditions the shoulders and ego are tied together. This simple but effective techniques can do wonders. Don't shrug it off!

Raise and lower your shoulders up and down rapidly with a quick breath. Inhale as you raise them up and exhale as you lower them. Do this for one minute. Then alternate shoulder lifts for 30 seconds. Inhale and exhale with the right, then inhale and exhale with the left shoulder. Remember to do this at your desk a few times each day. Build up to 3 minutes.

Tip #12: Run in Place with the Breath of Fire

Begin to run in place using the breath of fire. Remember, that in the breath of fire the belly goes in every time you exhale . Keep in mind

Get the full 24 page booklet in print at

<http://www.outside-the-box.net>