

Anxiety, Stress & Depression



A Pinku and Dadaji
Series

Stress is self made and not by others

Dadaji: Hello Pinku Good Morning!

Pinku: Good Morning Dadaji. Do you know Dadaji, Mantu could not come first in the class and hence, he did not sleep properly for two days. He kept on thinking how he came second all through the day it seems Dadaji.

Dadaji: Hmm... that's a modern day problem student's take stress for such small matters. They do not understand that coming first is not as important as self-development is.

Pinku: You said stress, why do people take stress at all Dadaji?

Dadaji: Before I explain you why people take stress, you should know what stress is. Well! When stressed, the body thinks it is under attack and hence, releases mix of hormones and chemicals such as adrenaline, cortisol and norepinephrine to prepare the body for physical action or in simple words stress readies our body in fight mode to combat the situation. This causes a number of reactions, from blood being diverted to muscles to shutting down unnecessary bodily functions such as digestion. Through the release of hormones such as

Don't take stress for small matters

adrenaline, cortisol and norepinephrine enables us to focus our attention so we can quickly respond to the situation. The challenge is when our body goes into a state of stress in inappropriate situations such as Mantu unable to come first in class, blood flow is going only to the most important muscles needed to fight and thus brain function is minimized. This can lead to an inability to 'think straight', a state that is a great hindrance in both our study, work and home lives. If we are kept in a state of stress for long periods, it can be detrimental to our health as it results in elevated cortisol levels which increase sugar and blood pressure levels.

Pinku: What is the simplest way to keep stress under control Dadaji?

Dadaji: The simplest technique to keep stress away is to attack the causes of stress.

Pinku: Causes of stress and what are they?



Stay balanced to avoid stress

Dadaji: Everyone has different stress triggers such as, school expectations, self-expectations, too much /excessive of daily homework, fear of failure (such as not coming first in class), not able to reach personal goals (such as coming second in 100 meters race whereas personal goal was to come first), unable to manage present situations, chronic illness or injuries, emotional problems (such as depression, anxiety, anger, grief, guilt, low self-esteem), financial obligations such as credit card bills, fight with loved ones, high workloads, un realistic deadlines, family problems, traumatic events, changes in life events, fatigue, insomnia (or sleeplessness) and on and on and on and on...

Pinku: Now tell me Dadaji how to attack these stress triggers?

Dadaji: Ah! You have given me a great task now. Let us see how to attack the triggers of stress:

1. How to manage School expectations?

⇒ Take assignments one baby step at a time meaning, If you have an essay to write that's making you feel anxious, list the indi-

Cut your tasks to small and achievable goals

vidual steps that lead to the destination of the essay being finished (finding sources, creating an outline, writing an intro), and the task will begin to feel less daunting.

- ⇒ Lower your goals meaning set a goal to feel satisfied with your performance instead of setting a goal of coming first in class.
- ⇒ Stay balanced during exam periods meaning, no matter how hard you push yourself, nobody can maintain constant focus, and you will burn yourself out if you try to push more and hence, take breaks during study,
- ⇒ Take time to relax during your busiest periods, listen to music and play wall tennis so on and so forth.
- ⇒ Take time for self-care meaning eat healthy food such as green leafy vegetables and fruits, sleep well, read during early morning hours, take time to perform creative activities such as drawing/painting



Too much thinking leads to stress

2. Too much /excessive of daily homework:

- * Start right away
- * Budget your time
- * Find a quiet place to focus
- * Avoid studying on your bed
- * Tackle the hardest assignments first
- * Keep moving ahead and take breaks in between

3. Fear of failure (such as not coming first in class):

- ◆ Instead of thinking "I can't accept failure" should be modified to "I can't accept not trying".
- ◆ Be aware that setback is quite common. Learn to move on.
- ◆ Remember you are not a permanent failure.

4. Not able to reach personal goals:

- ◆ Avoid negative self-talks and general fears
- ◆ Accept yourself
- ◆ Visualize yourself succeeding

Cut your tasks to small and achievable goals

- ◆ Allow yourself to identify with new possibilities
- ◆ Surround yourself with a supportive community

5. Unable to manage present situations:

- ◆ Walk around, do self-talk and search for possible solutions
- ◆ Do not panic the situation, try to understand the reasons for situation and move on
- ◆ Remember bad times will not last long

6. Depression:

- ◆ Forging stronger ties with self.
- ◆ Socialize more (but not with those who taunt you)
- ◆ Beat Procrastination
- ◆ Stop negative thoughts
- ◆ Stop blaming self



Stress can reduce self-esteem

- ◆ Try change your believe structure
- ◆ Do things that yourself belief says not possible
- ◆ Always remember anything that has a beginning has an end.

8. Anger/Rage:

- ◆ Shift towards positive energy when you get angry and avoid negative energy
- ◆ Think how to tackle situation in a better way
- ◆ Try to keep your worries away and think neutral

9. Grief:

- ◆ You should be cognizant that grief affects everyone at some point in their life due to loss of something or someone.
- ◆ You should know that grief cannot be long lasting
- ◆ Remember good movements spent and try to be happy

10. Guilt:

- ◆ Guilt is good. You are aware that you have

No Body in this world Knows Everything

done something wrong

- ◆ You cannot deal with guilt unless you try and correct yourself
- ◆ Be bold to talk the truth

11. Low self-esteem:

- ◆ Everybody knows only something and no one knows everything
- ◆ Develop awareness. Learn as much as you can
- ◆ Simply accept yourselves as you are your experiences are better teachers than someone else teaching you. Try and learn from your experience

Participate in everything you can

12. Financial Obligations:

- ◆ First and foremost, do not spend so much that you cannot return.
- ◆ Have an estimate of your spend vs. receivables



Ask for support when in stress

- ◆ Make payments on time if not at least make good minimum payments that will curb present situation
- ◆ Keep your self-beast known as desire under control

13. Fight with loved ones:

- ◆ Keep your frustration away when talking to your loved ones, they do not deserve grunt of your frustration
- ◆ Understand your loved ones frustrations and avoid un-necessary arguments

14. High workloads:

- ◆ Do not take too much on yourself, try and delegate as much as possible but have an overlook of what you have delegated
- ◆ Communicate your high workload, people understand

15. Un-realistic Deadlines:

- ◆ Jot down factors which may affect the deadlines
- ◆ Jot down risks in accelerating the tasks to meet deadlines

Every problem has a solution

- ◆ Communicate after affects even though unrealistic deadlines could be met

16. Family Problems:

- ◆ Take part in solving your family problems
- ◆ Family problems if cannot be resolved at all than those problems are not your problems. Better stay away

17. Traumatic events:

- ◆ Ask for support
- ◆ Give yourself time. It takes time to accept what has happened and to learn to live with it.
- ◆ Get into a routine

18. Changes in life events:

- ◆ Acknowledge things are changing and I need to change with changing things
- ◆ Converting negative change to positive change is in your hand



Pressure of targets lead to stress

- ◆ The more change that is happening, the more important it is to stick to your regular schedule as much as possible

19. Fatigue:

- ◆ Eat on time. If not possible, eat in small packages.
- ◆ Do not over eat
- ◆ Lose weight to gain energy
- ◆ Sleep well

20. Insomnia (or sleeplessness):

- ◆ Exercise regularly
- ◆ Make your sleeping environment comfortable
- ◆ Don't be affected by any tensions. Keep them in those respective safes where are they are required to be kept and come home happily.
- ◆ Eliminate stimulants like nicotine and caffeine or even alcohol

Pinku: But, Dadaji, these solutions doesn't seem as easy as you said.

Dadaji: Of Course! You are right Pinku but

Pressures will always be there; go through it

remember to old saying "Practice makes man perfect".

Pinku: Are there types of stress Dadaji?

Dadaji: Yes there are. Acute stress, episodic acute stress and Chronic stress.

Pinku: Oh! So what are the differences?

Dadaji: Let's start with acute stress; it is the most common form of stress. It comes from demands and pressures of the recent past and anticipated demands and pressures of the near future.

Pinku: Can you quote some examples Dadaji?

Dadaji: Well! These are short term stress such as stress due to examinations, stress due to participation in some competition, traffic jam, argument with your friend and criticism from your teacher so on and so forth.

Pinku: Ah! So acute stress come and goes correct Dadaji?



Thinking same thing again causes anxiety

Dadaji: Not exactly, repeated acute stress leads to episodic acute stress.

Pinku: Oh! Can you elaborate Dadaji?

Dadaji: Episodic stress occurs when someone takes on too many tasks, becomes overwhelmed by all the demands with an inability to meet those demands. They seem to have many different disastrous situations, live in chaos and disorganization. Personalities who have excessive competitive drive, aggressiveness, impatience, and always in a hurry usually succumb to episodic acute stress as things do not happen as they desire.

Pinku: Got it Dadaji. Now what is chronic stress Dadaji?

Dadaji: Extended period of episodic acute stress leads to chronic stress. Let me give an example, frequently failing in examinations, not getting any prizes in any competition participated, frequently not getting through competitive examinations, prolonged fighting between parents, teachers de meaning you on daily basis so on and so forth.

Pinku: How can you get rid of chronic stress?

Nothing is easy

In this world

Dadaji: Well! By changing others perception of you, by mutual talks and move on ignoring the disturbances can get you rid of chronic stress.

Pinku: When you say Dadaji it looks so easy. But, I am not sure whether all these are so easy to implement.

Dadaji: Nothings is easy Pinku. You need to practice to implement.

Pinku: So true Dadaji. Now tell me what is anxiety?

Dadaji: Well! Anxiety is eagerness to know something. However, when eagerness converts to apprehension/worry/concern than you have anxiety disorder.

Pinku: What are the causes of anxiety?

Dadaji: Anxiety disorders have a complicated network of causes, including:

⇒ Stress from a personal relationship, school, or financial difficulty can contribute greatly to anxiety disorders.



Sleep well to get rid of anxiety

- ⇒ People who have family members with an anxiety disorder are more likely to have anxiety disorder themselves.
- ⇒ Medical conditions can lead to an anxiety disorder, such as the side effects of medication, stress from a serious underlying medical condition that may not directly trigger the changes seen in anxiety disorder but might be causing significant lifestyle adjustments, pain, or restricted movement.
- ⇒ Mood disorders, disruptions to hormones can cause anxiety
- ⇒ The stress of day-to-day living
- ⇒ Drinking more alcohol or taking illicit substances, increasing anxiety levels and the risk of further complications
- ⇒ Low oxygen levels in high-altitude areas can add to anxiety symptoms.

Pinku: How can you fix anxiety Dadaji?

Dadaji: Having a balanced life usually fixes anxiety related disorders. Let me give you few tips:

- ⇒ Stepping back from the problem helps clear

Relaxed thinking will fetch you good results

your head. Take a time-out for what you may like to do the best such as listen to music, meditate, get a massage, or learn relaxation techniques.

- ⇒ Eat well-balanced meals. Do not skip any meals. Do keep healthful, energy-boosting snacks on hand.
- ⇒ Limit alcohol and caffeine, which can aggravate anxiety related disorders.
- ⇒ When stressed, your body needs additional sleep and rest. Get enough sleep.
- ⇒ Exercise daily to help you feel good and maintain your health. Check out the fitness tips below.
- ⇒ Take deep breaths. Inhale and exhale slowly.
- ⇒ Do your best. Instead of aiming for perfection, which isn't possible, be proud of however close you get.



Negative thoughts can trigger anxiety

- ⇒ Accept that you cannot control everything. Put your stress in perspective: Is it really as bad as you think?
- ⇒ Welcome humor. A good laugh goes a long way.
- ⇒ Make an effort to replace negative thoughts with positive ones.

Pinku: Similar to stress, do you have any types for anxiety as well?

Dadaji: Yes Pinku there are five major types of anxiety disorders which are:

- ⇒ Generalized Anxiety Disorder: GAD, is an anxiety disorder characterized by chronic anxiety, exaggerated worry and tension, even when there is little or nothing to provoke it.
- ⇒ Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: OCD, is an anxiety disorder and is characterized by recurrent, unwanted thoughts (obsessions) and/or repetitive behaviors (compulsions). Repetitive behaviors such as hand washing, counting, checking, or cleaning are often performed with the hope of preventing obsessive thoughts or making them go away.

Future has all answers why be anxious today?

Performing these so-called "rituals," however, provides only temporary relief, and not performing them markedly increases anxiety.

- ⇒ Panic Disorder: PD is an anxiety disorder and is characterized by unexpected and repeated episodes of intense fear accompanied by physical symptoms that may include chest pain, heart palpitations and shortness of breath, dizziness, or abdominal distress.
- ⇒ Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: PTSD, is an anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened. Traumatic events that may trigger PTSD include violent personal assaults, natural or human-caused disasters, accidents, or military combat.



Suppress thinking to fight depression

⇒ Social Phobia (or Social Anxiety Disorder): SAD is an anxiety disorder characterized by overwhelming anxiety and excessive self-consciousness in everyday social situations. Social phobia can be limited to only one type of situation such as a fear of speaking in formal or informal situations, or eating or drinking in front of others or, in its most severe form, may be so broad that a person experiences symptoms almost anytime they are around other people.

Pinku: Hmm... Understood Dadaji... Now let us talk about depression...

Dadaji: Well! Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest and can interfere with your daily functioning. Most people feel sad or depressed at times. It's a normal reaction to loss or life's struggles. But, when intense sadness including feeling helpless, hopeless, and worthless lasts for many days to weeks and keeps you from living your life, it may be something more than sadness what we call clinical depression which requires immediate medication and psychology consultancy.

Do not React
Respond

Pinku: How will I know that I have depression?

Dadaji: There are symptoms of depression that you can self-gauge such as:

- ⇒ A depressed mood during most of the day, especially in the morning
- ⇒ You feel tired or have a lack of energy almost every day.
- ⇒ You feel worthless or guilty almost every day.
- ⇒ You have a hard time focusing, remembering details, and making decisions.
- ⇒ You can't sleep or you sleep too much almost every day.
- ⇒ You have almost no interest or pleasure in many activities nearly every day.
- ⇒ You think often about death or suicide (not just a fear of death).



Take life as it comes to deal depression

⇒ You feel restless or slowed down.

⇒ You've lost or gained weight.

Pinku: Dadaji, but why people go into depression?

Dadaji: Lots of things influence why a person gets depressed. Some of it is biology things like our genes, brain chemistry, and hormones, some are social and family situations (The death of a family member, friend, loved one or pet sometimes goes beyond normal grief and leads to depression) we face and major reasons are personality issues, or how we react to life events and major failures (such as love failure/academic failure/sports, arts or science failure).

Pinku: How to come out of depression?

Dadaji: The simplest technique to get rid of depression is to not to think about those events again and again which was the major cause of depression.

Pinku: Dadaji, you said it so easily but I assume, it will be very difficult to come out of depression situation let's say if someone's loved one is no more or someone is broken

Do not React
Respond

heart.

Dadaji: Absolutely! But ultimate aim of life is "Move On" till you yourself "rest". And, let me tell you Pinku that time is the big healer, if you give time to yourself, you concentrate on other areas and you engage yourself in something immensely than depression situations can be curbed. Ending life or living as if "I have nothing to do in this life" is not good. God has created you for a purpose. You have to find that purpose and work towards it. If somebody is gone or someone has broken your heart does not mean that this is the end of life. Life must go on, the show must go on and on and on and on...

Pinku: I think that was a great insight Dadaji. Thank you for detailing about ASD. I liked the way you were convincing.

